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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

PERSISTING AND NONPERSISTING TRANSFER STUDENTS AT RED DEER COLLEGE

BY

DIANE TYLER

©

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION
IN
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled PERSISTING AND NONPERSISTING TRANSFER STUDENTS AT RED DEER COLLEGE submitted by Diane Tyler in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Adult and Higher Education.

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ABSTRACT

This study describes the characteristics of persisting and nonpersisting students in second year university transfer programs at Red Deer College, Alberta. The population of 244 students was surveyed in March 1987 prior to completion of the second year (response rate 65.5%), and respondents were surveyed again the following October after transfer to university would normally have occurred. Of the respondents, 109 transferred, 35 reregistered at the College, and 16 discontinued studies.

The respondents were predominantly young, single, and full-time in studies. Slightly more than half (52.5%) were female. Financial concerns were prevalent. The data suggested that these students were well-integrated within the College, spending on average more than 16 hours a week in College-related social activities, and 37.4 hours a week in class or studying. Students had positive perceptions of the College environment. Almost half (44.4%) had good to excellent cumulative grade point averages. Most had high expectations of their academic achievements, and intended to complete their degree programs within two years. Academic and self-development goals were rated higher than employment goals.

Statistically significant differences in persister and nonpersister responses were discovered in only a few variables: Nonpersisters appeared to have less confidence in their academic ability, were less certain of continuing their studies in the fall of 1987, expected to take longer to complete their first degree, and believed more so than persisters that they might discontinue university studies within the

next three years. Nonpersisters also rated goal statements slightly lower than persisters, suggesting that the former may be slightly less goal-oriented than the latter.

Nonpersisters' top rated reasons for discontinuing studies were "need for a break in studies," and "obtained a desirable job." All nonpersisters indicated their College studies were of value to them.

Persisters indicated few difficulties in the transfer process. Twenty-two indicated some difficulties in obtaining credit for courses completed at the College. Persisters indicated coping with the increased costs of university, and getting to know faculty were their greatest adjustments in attending university.

Nonrespondents were similar to respondents in background characteristics and persistence rates.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Student persistence in post-secondary education is emerging as an important issue in this decade. During the period of post-secondary expansion in the decades of the sixties and seventies, attention focused on issues of equity and accessibility and issues of attrition and retention did not attract as much interest. Post-secondary institutions now operate in a climate of retrenchment and restraint. Governments and taxpayers, weighing the worth of education against other priorities, are increasingly concerned with retention as a significant indicator of institutional quality and impact (Pascarella, 1986, p. 100, and others).

Institutions, whose funding is often based on enrolments, are concerned about withdrawals, and frequently view attrition as a sign of institutional failure. Some institutions are developing active retention programs, finding these to be generally less costly than recruitment programs and with the added benefit of being effective in improving the students' post-secondary experiences (Noel, Levitz, Saluri & Associates, 1985, p. xiii).

Research indicates the magnitude of attrition. In American universities, attrition rates in the twentieth century have remained relatively constant at about 50% (Lenning, Beal & Sauer, 1980, p. 37; Pantages & Creedon, 1978, p. 55; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1977, p. 25; Tinto, 1982, p. 693), whereas the rates for community colleges are usually higher (Astin, 1975, p. 16; Beal & Noel, 1980, p. 17).

Although data on attrition in Canada are inadequate, Pascal & Kanowich (1979, p. 28) suggest that the problem of attrition is just as serious in Canadian universities and that attrition rates may be increasing (p. 18).

Attrition may also be a serious problem for the student who withdraws. Depending on the circumstances, withdrawing from studies may be personally traumatic for the student, causing not only personal frustration, a loss in self-concept, but also shattered career plans and lowered lifetime earnings. For others, leaving studies may be a positive decision, based on exploration and careful thought about life goals.

Attrition is a multi-dimensional phenomena for the institution and student who leaves. Was the student dissatisfied with the program? Could the institution have prevented the withdrawal? Did the student arrive at an appropriate and timely decision? Did the withdrawal represent a failure on the part of the student or the institution, or did the decision to leave represent a positive step in a new direction? These are all issues which require further exploration.

Purpose of the Study

This study is concerned with dropouts occurring in the interval between the end of the second year in the university transfer program at Red Deer College and the beginning of the following fall session.

The purpose of this study is threefold:

1. To examine the characteristics of Red Deer College transfer students near the end of the transfer program;

2. To determine the attrition rate and related student perceptions;

3. To identify differences between persisters and nonpersisters.

Research Questions

The research questions addressed were:

1. What were the transfer students' characteristics in terms of background and academic factors, intentions and goals while at the College, perceptions of the College environment, and academic achievements?

2. How satisfied were transfer students with their College experience?

3. What intentions did the transfer students express regarding further studies?

4. What were the outcomes for transfer students in terms of persistence and nonpersistence?

5. What reasons were given for nonpersistence?

6. What transfer difficulties were encountered by persisters?

7. What differences in student characteristics distinguished between persisters and nonpersisters?

Definitions

For the purpose of this study the following definitions apply.

Persister: A student who is registered full- or part-time in the winter term, and who registers full- or part-time in the fall term at a post-secondary institution other than Red Deer College.

Nonpersister: A student who is registered full- or part-time in the winter term, and who does not register in the fall term at a post-secondary institution.

[Note: A student who is registered full- or part-time in the winter term, and who registers full- or part-time at Red Deer College in the subsequent fall term, is not considered to be a persister for the purpose of this study.]

University transfer program: A selection of College courses, arranged in program groupings (e.g., Arts, Education, Pre-professional, etc.), which are listed in the Alberta Transfer Guide as transferrable for equivalent course credit to one or more of the five provincial universities.

Second year transfer program: A program which meets the requirements of the second year of university studies (normally consisting of courses numbered at the 300 level).

First year transfer student: A student who has qualified for admission to the unversity transfer program and is registered in one or more university transfer courses. (Also a student who is concurrently taking one or more pre-college courses but whose registration includes a minimum of sixty per cent of the full course load required in first year university studies.)

Second year transfer student: A student who is registered in the university transfer program who has completed the minimum of sixty per cent of the full course load required in first year university studies.

Drop-out: A student who has discontinued post-secondary studies prior to completion of the program.

Context

Red Deer College is a medium-sized Alberta college with a full-time equivalent registration in 1986-87 of 3300. It is located midway between Edmonton and Calgary, approximately 150 kilometers from each city. The College is comprehensive, offering programs in academic upgrading, high school equivalency, career training, and university transfer. The two year university transfer program accounts for about one-quarter of the total enrolment. University transfer students may transfer to university at any point in their College program, but those who do not meet Alberta universities' admission requirements must successfully complete at least one year in College and be recommended by the College before being eligible for admission to university. Admission to third year in some faculties in some of the provincial universities is competitive, based on grades. In Alberta, inter-institutional transfers are governed by a Transfer Guide produced annually by the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer. Transferability of courses as listed in the guide is guaranteed.

Significance of the Study

Although it is 20 to 30 years since the establishment of most of the community colleges in Canada, there has been very little research on college learners (Dennison & Gallagher, 1986, p. 263). Anisef (1985, p. 214) noted that while more than four in ten post-secondary students in Canada are registered in the colleges, research has concentrated on university and university students. He indicated that: "More knowledge is needed about the relationship(s) of colleges and universities within provinces and how this influences access." In times of fiscal constraint, the need for a solid body of research on which to base decisions is critical.

Even less is known about attrition among college students in general, and among those registered in university transfer programs in particular (reported to be as high as 90% of college transfer students). As a result, questions have been raised about the effectiveness of the community colleges in their role as providers of university transfer programs.

The results of this research will be helpful to Red Deer College in several ways. It will indicate how effective the College is in meeting its mandate of broadening accessibility to university programs. It will provide information on transfer rates needed to determine if an attrition problem exists, or if the rates are presently at acceptable levels. It will be useful in providing information about students' experiences with the transfer process, and allowing the College to identify areas of concern which require attention. Ways of helping students with the transition process may be an outcome (e.g., improving articulation, student orientation to university and academic advisement, etc.) Gilbert and Gomme (1986, p. 236) indicated that there is a need for more information on the composition and activities of transfer students to enable universities and colleges to counsel students more efficiently. In addition, if factors associated with nonpersistence can be identified, it may be possible for the College (or receiving institutions) to develop intervention strategies to improve persistence rates.

The study also provides information on the characteristics of transfer students, and their perceptions of the College. The former may be useful to the College in determining target groups for recruitment should the College seek to expand its offerings in transfer programs. The latter provides information helpful to the College in improving the students' educational experiences. Student preferences to transfer, or to remain at the College if a degree program of interest were available, is relevant should the College wish to expand its role as brokers of university degree programs and courses or, alternatively, seek degree-granting status.

This study may have practical value for the Alberta Department of Advanced Education, responsible for coordinating and assigning programs within the post-secondary sector. The Provincial Council on Admission and Transfer, charged with overseeing college/university articulation matters, may also be interested in the findings. Other Alberta Colleges offering university transfer programs and provincial universities may wish to learn Red Deer College students' perceptions of the transfer process, to help them identify potential problem areas for further investigation. Universities in Alberta might find the information useful in improving recruitment of college leavers and in planning the transition process. In Alberta, accessibility to university is an issue of growing importance in view of the plans of the Province's largest university, the University of Alberta (which attracts the majority of Red Deer College transfer students), to decrease the number of undergraduate students and to raise admission requirements (University of Alberta, 1986).

Although community colleges in other Canadian provinces follow different patterns of articulation, British Columbia and Alberta have similarities, and this study may be of interest to British Columbia colleges and those concerned with college/university transfer arrangements.

This study provides no special contribution to a theoretical understanding of transfer student attrition, but it adds to a limited body of knowledge of transfer in Canadian institutions. The main significance of this study, however, lies in its practical value in facilitating student access to university programs.

Conceptual Framework

The reasons for student withdrawal are complex and multidimensional. A review of the literature (see Chapter 2) indicates the importance to persistence of background characteristics of students; of student goals and motivations; of environment and student/institution fit; and of academic achievement. These factors appear to interact in some manner. Background characteristics may influence student goals (e.g., major financial difficulties while in college may weaken a student's goal commitment). Academic factors (e.g., grade point average) may be negatively influenced by background characteristics such as the amount of time required to meet out-of-class employment or family-related commitments. A background factor such as student age may influence perceptions of the environment. For example, an older student may have feelings of mismatch and isolation from younger student peers, may not integrate socially on the campus, and as a result goal commitment may be weakened.

Similarly, academic factors may interact with goal commitment and perceptions of the environment. For example, if a student's academic experiences are negative, then goal commitment may be weakened. Environment factors also interact with goals, background, and academic factors. For example, goal commitment may be strengthened in students who enjoy very positive perceptions of the campus environment, and experience feelings of match, congruency, or fit with the institution.

The combined interaction of these factors may influence student satisfaction or dissatisfaction which in turn may influence intentions and persistence. Persistence is likely to be higher for students who are satisfied with the manner in which they experience college, and lower for those who are dissatisfied. These relationships are depicted in Figure 1.

This study, then, takes an exploratory approach to discover what characteristics are associated with persisters and nonpersisters. Variables examined include student background characteristics, goals and intentions, academic achievement, and perceptions of the College environment. Although these categories of characteristics may be interactive, it is not the intent of this study to look at the interaction of variables in a predictive sense, but rather to see which characteristics (if any) can be associated with persistence and nonpersistence.

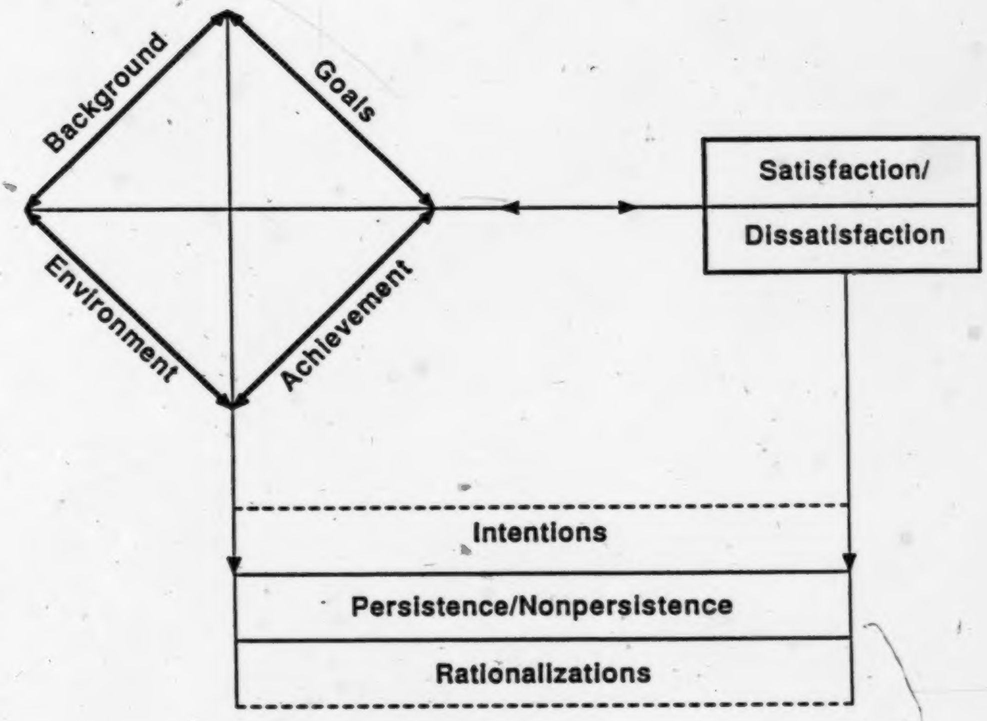
Background
Goals
Environment
Achievement
Satisfaction/
Dissatisfaction
Intentions
Persistence/Nonpersistence
Rationalizations

Figure 1. Interactions between variables influencing attrition.

Delimitations and Limitations

The research was delimited to Red Deer College students who were registered in second year of the university transfer program in March, 1987. The population for the study excluded Red Deer College university transfer program students who transferred out of the College in the fall, 1987, after one year of College studies. It also excluded students in career diploma programs who transferred to university after one or more years of College studies.

The data are not generalizable to other colleges in Alberta or Canada. Prior research has shown that nonpersistence differs between institutions based on size, location, programming, clientele, and a variety of other factors.

There are several limitations to the study:

1. The time in which the initial survey was conducted (prior to second term final examinations) may have evoked a different response than at some other time of the year when students were not under the pressure of impending examinations.

2. A student's pre-enrolment characteristics such as the father's or mother's educational level, socio-economic status of the family, or academic performance in high school may be significant variables, but were beyond the scope of this study.

3. The research is a single year study, and not longitudinal. It therefore does not differentiate (except in student intentions as indicated by responses) between stepping out or dropping out.

4. Students may have given "socially acceptable" reasons for discontinuing their studies, rather than the authentic reason(s). At time of the survey, they may not have fully comprehended the actual reasons for withdrawal.

Outline of the Report

The following chapter reviews the research undertaken recently in persistence and nonpersistence at the post-secondary level in the United States and in Canada.

Chapter 3 explains the research methodology, response rates to the two surveys conducted, and data analysis. Chapter 4 provides a discussion of the research findings resulting from the data analysis. Chapter 5 includes the conclusions and recommendations for future action or research.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

The review of the literature covers a broad body of research related to several aspects of attrition and retention in post-secondary education. The term "attrition" refers to the phenomenon of students dropping out or leaving a program before its completion. The student may have discontinued studies voluntarily, or have been withdrawn for academic reasons. The term "retention" refers to the phenomenon of student persistence. Studies on attrition and retention have used a variety of research approaches.

Prior research has dealt with several aspects of attrition and retention relevant to this study. One aspect of the research has dealt with student transition from college to university, and involved not only studies related to articulation between institutions, but also those which considered student perceptions of the transition, and transfer outcomes. Other research broadly studied the attrition phenomena, and usually involved analysis and/or reporting of the characteristics of persisting and nonpersisting students.

The review also includes a discussion of the state of the art in recent attrition research.

Research Approaches

The various approaches used to study attrition can generally be categorized as statistical, descriptive, and case studies. Statistical studies considered rates and percentages of withdrawing students, and made general projections based on trends. Usually, no direct contact was made with dropouts or persisters, and the data were being derived from institutional files (see for example, Harvie and Fair, 1969, and Stoll and Scarf, 1983).

Statistical Studies

An example of a statistical study relevant to the present research is a longitudinal study of transfer and degree completion rates conducted by the British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training (1987). The study tracked college students from university transfer programs to determine transfer rates, and found that the mean attrition rates varied from 16% in metropolitan areas, to 12% in rural areas, to 7% in remote areas. These transfer rates were based on numbers of students transferring as a proportion of total students registered in both years of the transfer programs. The study noted that of the transferring students, 84% go directly to university immediately following their departure from college. Also, there was a strong relationship between grade point average on entry and degree completion rates. The higher the grade point average, the greater the likelihood of completion.

The Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (1981) reported on the transfer patterns among Alberta institutions, and indicated a significant trend was the growth of part-time students transferring to university (136% from 1979 to 1980). In 1981 the number of full-time students transferring within and into provincial post-secondary institutions was 6933.

In a study at Red Deer College, Raffa (1984) discovered that withdrawal rates were higher in first year college programs than in the second, and that part-time students were more liable to withdraw than were full-time students.

Although these studies, and other statistical studies, were a valuable first step in attrition research and often provided institutions with an indication of the extent of attrition and the characteristics of those who withdrew, most did not normally control for other variables (which may have contributed to an apparent correlation between characteristics), and hence no causal relationships could be drawn between characteristics and nonpersistence.

Descriptive Studies

Descriptive studies have examined relationships between withdrawing and persisting students, and between variables such as demographic, academic, environmental, or those related to student personality. A few of these studies are described below, and others are noted later in this review.

In one example of a descriptive study, Hilton (1982) researched persistence and dropout from college and vocational institutions in the U.S., and found that retention was influenced primarily by educational status prior to entry, and that this in turn was influenced by high school curricula. Variables such as race, sex, and socioeconomic status did not affect persistence.

Terenzini and Pascarella (1977) studied first year students at Syracuse University in the U.S. and found that informal interaction with faculty was very important in the integration of students, and that academic and social integration of students were key variables influencing persistence/nonpersistence decisions.

On a similar vein, Munro (1981) studied a nationwide sample of U.S. college students and discovered academic integration was important to persistence, whereas social integration had no significant effect.

Descriptive studies have been found useful in identifying potential relationships between persistence and various factors, and have been important in advancing the field of attrition research.

Case Studies

Case studies have used various approaches to examining attrition in a specific situation. Many of these studies research attrition at a particular institution.

For example, Small and Konrad (1986) conducted a longitudinal study of students transferring from Alberta's Grant MacEwan Community College to the University of Alberta. Although these college students experienced a slight drop in their achievement levels, about half eventually earned a degree. They recommended that the receiving university, the University of Alberta, in future accept senior level credits from the College.

All three types of research approaches described above have resulted in useful information on transfer and attrition.

Transfer Process

The term "transfer process" describes the manner in which institutions handle transferring students and how transferring affects the students involved. Three aspects of the process are discussed: articulation, student perceptions, and transfer outcomes.

Articulation

Articulation between receiving and sending institutions may have a strong impact on transferring students. For example, Kintzer (1982) noted that many community college students did not transfer because of difficulties experienced in the transfer process, and the fact that many were not accepted because universities were frequently oversubscribed and had made admission requirements more stringent. He observed that it was beneficial to persistence to have college transfer students in a distinct university transfer program, rather than being in transfer courses which were open to students in all programs, as these courses tended otherwise to be diluted to meet the variety in registrant needs and abilities, and may not then be comparable with those offered by major receiving institutions.

Other studies have been concerned with improving articulation arrangements between institutions, and have made recommendations for the better management of articulation. Kintzer and Richardson (1986), for example, proposed a plan of action to improve community college transfer rates. Their plan involved establishing state coordinating boards, developing transfer guides guaranteeing transferability of courses, and improving advisement for transfer students. They urged community colleges to take the initiative and responsibility for designing acceptable university transfer courses, and for working with the universities to define minimum academic standards and exit competencies for transfer students.

Weleschuk and Eaton (1971, pp. 2-4) described six mechanisms for articulation: super board, coordinating council, standing articulation committee, accreditiation, parallel courses, and automatic breadth provisions (e.g., University of California accepts any 45 junior college credits providing that the sending college certifies that the student has met curriculum breadth requirements).

In another study, Gregor (1979) reviewed transfer arrangements in Canadian post-secondary institutions and noted concern lest the colleges surrender too much of their autonomy by conforming to university requirements. His fear was that the colleges might weaken their mandated role in the post-secondary sector.

Palmer (1987) examined efforts to improve articulation from U.S. community colleges to universities, and recommended a multidimensional program involving high schools, colleges, and universities cooperating in easing the flow of students through tracking and improvements in advisement, and improving articulation between these three sectors.

These and other authors (e.g., Cohen et al, 1985, Knoell, 1982, & Sheldon, 1982) indicated that smooth functioning articulation arrangements have been important in increasing transfer rates.

Student Perceptions

Astin (1975, pp. 160-161) and others have indicated that students sometimes become bogged down in the transfer process and dropout. Student anxiety with the process may be a deterrent to transfer. He noted that the physical move, or even the paper work involved in transfer, results in attrition at point of transfer.

Transfer Outcomes

Some broadly based studies which have dealt with the transition between college and university focussed more on student outcomes than on articulation arrangements or student perceptions of the process.

Knoell (1982) and Sheldon (1982) reviewed the findings of a California statewide longitudinal study from 1978 to 1981. Knoell identified that full-time transfer students were more likely than part-time students to complete their programs on a sequential basis, have higher academic achievement levels, tended to be of traditional college age, and had at least some high school training prior to admission.

Sheldon (1982) analysed the data by student intentions to transfer, and found intentions were a significant predictor of transfer, and that the more college transfer courses a student completed, the more likely the student would transfer. Of students identified as of low ability (25% of the entrants), only 50-60% transferred. Sheldon attributed the decreasing numbers of transfer students in California colleges as largely due to the fact that many of these students had no intention of transferring, but were attending to gain some reasonable academic competency.

Cohen et al. (1985) researched transfer students at 24 U.S. institutions and found that students whose transfer-oriented behavior was high tended to be full-time, of traditional college age, most likely to be working 21 to 30 hours a week, and were aspiring to a graduate or professional degree. He found academic and social integration to be significant predictors of transfer.

Research has shown that students frequently experience an initial period of trauma and declining academic performance following transfer, which is identified as "transfer shock." During this period, students suffer from a lack of academic and social integration which may influence their performance and their comfort or "fit" in the new institution. "Transfer shock syndrome" has been noted widely by researchers, including Cole (1986), Dennison et al. (1982), Holahan (1983), Rodriguez (1987) and others.

Student Attrition

Student attrition has also been studied within the context of transfer. Attrition may be voluntary, or required by the institution (usually because of failures in performance). Attrition may be either long term, or the student may step out of studies for a short period of time. Attrition may occur in the college or university context, or in the transition period between, and the research focus may be attrition within the institution, or at point of transfer. Research may be categorized as university studies, college studies, and studies concerned with transfer student attrition.

University Studies

Pascal and Kanowich (1979) conducted a search of the Canadian research related to attrition and found that, although there were few published studies, many Canadian universities were conducting in-house institutional attrition studies. Most studies were statistical in nature and almost all ignored the multicausality of attrition. In general, student withdrawal was highest in the first year, attrition rates were highest in Arts, and many students withdrew for financial reasons. They pointed to a strong need for further research in the area, and urged institutions to adopt similar definitions for "dropout", and similar methodologies for research, which might improve generalizability of data.

In one Canadian study, Lussier (1980) described the characteristics of dropouts from the University of Manitoba, and found that conflict between jobs and studies, family problems, dissatisfaction with the university, and financial problems were most prevalent reasons given for dropping out.

In another, Ungar (1980) studied attrition at Scarborough College campus of the University of Toronto. He was concerned about the increasing attrition rates at Ontario universities and found that students were frequently lured from studies by available jobs, and that coping with financial costs of university was of secondary importance. He noted that many students were not committed to obtaining a degree, partially due to doubts of the cost/benefit of a degree.

While there has been little research in Canada, a vast field of research exists in the U.S. A few examples are provided below.

Some studies considered personality factors. For example, Morgan (1974) researched male attrition at the University of Kentucky, and found that the most important discriminator was overall ability. The most able and most autonomous group were the most attrition prone, and the most authoritarian persisted to become seniors.

Other studies considered academic, environment, and other factors, and the following are examples. Lunneborg and Lunneborg (1976) researched characteristics of community college students after transferring to university, and their findings indicated that compared to students native to the university, college students were over-represented in social sciences, and under-represented in natural sciences; that fewer were graduate school bound because of family responsibilities, financial obstacles, and inadequate academic record, and more were troubled by the isolation they experienced while at university.

Pascarella and Chapman (1983) found that social integration played a more important role in influencing persistence at four-year primarily residential institutions, while academic integration was more important at two-year and four-year primarily commuter institutions.

Rootman (1972), studying students at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, found that person-role fit and interpersonal fit were major determinants of withdrawal. Attrition was seen as a means of coping with the stresses resulting from incongruence between student and environment.

Spady (1971) tested his theoretical model of dropout at the University of Chicago. Academic performance and faculty/student contacts were dominant influences on attrition.

There have been many studies of university attrition, and these are but a few examples. An extensive list of factors potentially influencing attrition have been researched, and findings were sometimes equivocal. General themes have, however, emerged, some more dominant than others, and these will be discussed later in this chapter.

College Attrition

Despite college dropout rates being comparatively higher than those in universities, community college attrition has not received the same attention from researchers. This fact has been noted by Astin (1975, p. 16), Bensimon and Riley (1984, p. 4), California Community Colleges (1984, p. 14), Hilton (1982, p. 14), Knoell (1982, p. 20), and Lee (1982, p. 8). In Canada very few attrition studies have been published.

Pantages and Creedon (1978) surveyed college attrition studies completed in the period 1950 to 1976. Most of the studies were institution-specific, ex post facto, single studies, and did not consider the multidimensional nature of attrition. Research results were frequently equivocal and seldom generalizable. They found that the factors most significant to attrition in these studies were: academic (grade point average, high school rank, or results of scholastic aptitude tests); motivation and commitment; financial aid; and college/student fit.

The concept of fit was also researched in many other studies, and only a few are noted here. Munro (1981) studied a national sample of U.S. college students and discovered academic integration important to persistence, whereas social integration had no significant effect. The research of Pascarella, Smart and Ethington (1986), however, confirmed the importance of both academic and social integration, as well as student-environment fit. Pascarella, Terenzini and Wolfe (1986) considered the effects of attending an orientation program on integration, and found that this had significant direct effects on social integration and institutional commitment, and indirect effects on persistence. Social integration was also influenced by being female, by social integration in high school previously, and precollege goal commitment.

Satisfaction with the environment has also been researched. Bell (1984) studied attrition among students at Richland College in the U.S. He found that 98% of persisters and nonpersisters were satisfied with College, and that the College was meeting the majority of their needs. Reasons for withdrawal included: student's course of study completed, transferred to another institution, financial difficulties, and personal problems.

In another study, DeBoer (1985) studied achievement motivation in a college setting, and found that factors linked to attrition included: low expectations, low grades, and anticipation of discontinuing. Students who viewed their achievement as a result of ability and hard work were more motivated to persist than those who considered their failure was due to academic incompetence.

Concepts such as satisfaction with the environment, commitment to goals, intentions to persist have been frequently studied in attrition research and, normally, have been important factors.

Attrition Among Transfer Students

At the point of transfer, students are attrition-prone. Coping with studies in the institution, problems in moving and transition, and other problems associated with transferring, cause students to be vulnerable to dropout. Other students may choose this point to reconsider their academic and life goals, and dropping out of studies may be a positive decision for them.

There is very little data available on attrition among college students registered in university transfer programs. Some of the studies which are available indicated that attrition is a serious cause for concern, with persistence rates as low as 10% of college students registered in university transfer programs (e.g., British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training, 1987; Knoell, 1982, p. 8; Kintzer & Wattenbarger, 1981, p. 1; & Sheldon, 1982, p. 7-7).

Astin (1975) completed one of the more comprehensive studies of college attrition from university transfer programs. He studied the characteristics of community college transfer students who failed to obtain a baccalaureate, and discovered that the relatively high dropout rates resulted from several factors: lack of financial aid and job opportunities on campus, absence of student housing, and the attrition-prone nature of students entering the colleges. Nonpersisters most frequently indicated their reasons for withdrawal as: boredom with courses, financial difficulties, marriage/pregnancy/or other family responsibilities (more frequent among women), poor grades (more frequent among men), and change in career goals. Those who were most dropout-prone had low aspirations, poor study habits, relatively uneducated parents, and came from small town backgrounds. Astin found that the most predictive factor in persistence was students' past academic records, and the next most predictive was their degree plans at time of entry.

Bensimon and Riley (1984) researched community college attrition in transfer programs at 24 urban U.S. colleges, and found that intentions to transfer were very important, and that persisting students could be described as aspiring to a graduate degree rather than to a baccalaureate, being aware of transfer opportunities, and planning to proceed in studies.

Cohen et al. (1985) noted a disparity between entering students' aspirations for a degree and student outcomes (p. 102). In the U.S. colleges he researched, over 75% of full-time college first year students indicated that they planned on obtaining a bachelor's degree, but follow-up studies indicated that nine years after their initial registration in college, less than 25% had achieved their goal. He indicated that degree aspirations and commitment were only significant if supported by transfer specific attitudes and behaviors (p. 184). Academic and social integration were predictors of transfer behaviors and attitudes.

Jones, Forrester, and Dennison (1980) researched the characteristics of British Columbia community college students and found that while only 13% transferred to university, 33% indicated that they had achieved their objectives before discontinuing studies. Forty per cent of these nonpersisters regarded themselves as stepouts. They noted that college-age students more frequently than adult students (i.e., those over 25 years) reported preparation for transfer as a reason for attending college. Personal enrichment was more frequently reported by adults, than by college-age students (pp. 49-50). They noted that many of the nonpersisters viewed college as a time to experiment, and many did not have defined goals. The single most important factor in persistence was the perceived value of education to employment (p. 77). Cost of education and academic problems were minimal factors in nonpersisters' decisions to discontinue college.

In general, the research supports findings that student/environment fit, strength of goals and intentions, satisfaction with academic performance, and being of traditional college-age have been among the important factors in attrition research.

State of the Art in Attrition Research

The studies cited above, and others on attrition, have led to the author's identification of several important themes or issues. These are described below as a concluding comment.

1. Specificity of studies. The vast majority of reseach has been launched to suit the particular needs of institutions, or systems, in discovering information helpful to understanding why their students were withdrawing. This was noted by Pascal and Kanowich (1979) and others. Most studies, then, were not replications of previous research, so do not allow comparisons of data.

2. Defining "dropout." This specificity has produced a wide variety of classifications of "dropout." Definitions may or may not include students who transfer, students who enter institutions without an intention to pursue a degree, students who register but never attend classes, etc. As a result of these differences, attrition rates are seldom useful for comparison if taken out of the context in which they occurred. Definitions continue to vary widely in accordance with individual institutional needs, despite the call for a common definition of "dropout" by those who seek to advance the field of attrition research (Bean, 1986, p. 48; Gilbert & Gomme, 1986, p. 235; Pantages & Creedon, 1978, pp. 51-53; Pascal & Kanowich, 1979, p. 33; Spady, 1970, p. 65; Tinto, 1975, p. 89 & 1982, p. 3).

3. Student characteristics. Various characteristics have more consistently than others appeared to relate to attrition. Attrition-prone students are more likely than persisters to have some of the following characteristics: older than usual college age, attending part-time, underprepared academically, beset with financial problems, and have prevailing attitudes and backgrounds which differ from those of the majority of students. This portrait of the nonpersister has been supported by many researchers including Aiken (1982), Astin (1975), Beal & Noel (1980), Bensimon & Riley (1984), Brigman & Stager (1980), Cohen et al (1985), Cuyhoga Community College (1987), Knoell (1982), McIntyre (1984), Pantages & Creedon (1979), Martin (1985), and Tinto (1982).

4. Environmental factors. Resulting from the research on student-environment fit, environmental factors have emerged as major determinants in student persistence, and have been the focus of institutional retention efforts. Institutions able to facilitate student social and academic integration, and to improve student/institution match, have increased student satisfaction, commitment, and hence persistence.

One environmental factor, the importance of students' informal interaction with faculty, has frequently been cited by researchers as significant to integration and thus to persistence (Gilbert & Gomme, 1986, p. 232; Lunneborg & Lunneborg, 1986, p. 63; Spady, 1971, p. 59; and others).

The characteristics of an institution also are an aspect of environment influencing attrition. Institutional characteristics partly determine the ease and extent to which students integrate into the mainstream of the academic and social life of the campus. Student residences, on campus part-time employment, activities, intramurals and athletics, academic policies which encourage faculty/student interactions, orientation programs, and other such programs enhance integration. Small campuses close to the students' homes (so that students do not have to commute), longer programs, articulation arrangements with receiving institutions, institutional commitment and emphasis to a distinctive transfer program, or private institutions with a religious purpose have all been found to enhance persistence.

Significant research in this area has been undertaken by Astin (1975), Boshier (1971 & 1973), Cope & Hannah (1975), Pascarella (1980, 1986), Pascarella, Terenzini and Wolfe (1986), Pascarella, Smart and Ethington (1986), Spady (1971), and Tinto (1975, 1982).

5. Search for models. The quest for a model predictive of attrition appears to have begun with Spady (1971) who proposed a model based on the importance of social and academic integration to persistence. He hypothesized that factors such as family background, friendship support, grades and intellectual development influenced social and academic integration, which in turn influenced institutional commitment and persistence.

The concept of integration refers to the degree to which a student experiences comfort or congruency with the institutional environment. Interactions between the student and the institutional environment were hypothesized as contributing to student persistence if they were positive, or to student attrition if they were negative.

Tinto (1975) proposed the most widely cited attrition model, which has been tested and frequently supported by other researchers. His model stressed the importance of person-environment fit. Background characteristics were viewed as interactive and as influencing goal and institutional commitment, which in turn influenced academic and social integration resulting in still greater goal and institutional commitment. Peer group and faculty interactions particularly affected social integration and institutional commitment. The strength of goal commitment and institutional commitment impacted persistence/nonpersistence decisions.

This model has attracted considerable attention from attrition researchers and many variations have evolved (Bean, 1982, Clarke, 1987, Johnson, 1987, and Pascarella, 1980). Some tests of the model have indicated that compensatory relationships may exist between variables, so that strength in one may be compensated by weakness in another.

Despite all these efforts, much is still unknown about the very complex, multidimensional problem of attrition in general, and about attrition among transfer students in particular. No model has yet been developed which addresses why students do or do not transfer (Tinto, 1982, p. 690). There may be qualitative differences between reasons why students drop out permanently and why they drop out at point of transfer, which could be associated with relocating, additional financial burdens incurred, or inability to accept a different lifestyle and campus culture.

Models have been useful in guiding research, but have not proven to be transferrable between institutions and over time, or even between subgroups within heterogeneous student populations (Bean, 1986, p. 49). No single model is equally satisfactory to all post-secondary institutions (Aitken, 1982, p. 47), and the "grand theory" is yet to be discovered (Tinto, 1982, p. 688).

The results of research related to environmental factors and student fit present a challenge, however, to the institutions to improve academic and social integration of students, and thereby strengthen student goal commitment and satisfaction with their educational experiences. Since post-enrolment experiences have proven to be more important in attrition than pre-enrolment characteristics (Gilbert & Gomme, 1986, & others), the institution's role, and one for which it must take responsibility, is clear. This research provides some useful directions for institutions, and substance for development of retention programs.

CHAPTER 3

Research Procedures

Introduction

The survey population was defined as students registered at Red Deer College in the second year of the university transfer program (N = 244). The mailed questionnaire approach was used to facilitate surveying the total population and to allow data analysis by computer. A mailed questionnaire survey adapted well to the factual, non-threatening nature of most of the data collected.

Most of the data were gathered from an initial questionnaire mailed to students March 18, 1987. Second and third mailings were sent subsequently to nonrespondents. A short follow-up questionnaire was mailed to respondents of the first questionnaire October 1, 1987. Where current addresses for nonrespondents were not available, nonrespondents' phone numbers were obtained and phone interviews conducted. Alberta universities and colleges were contacted in attempt to establish the enrolment status of the remaining nonrespondents.

Questionnaires

The initial questionnaire mailed in March (Appendix A) asked for information as listed below:

1. Demographic information (i.e., age, gender, and marital status).

2. Amount of time involved in college related activity (i.e., classes, studying, socializing with college friends and staff, and college-organized activities such as intramurals); working in paid employment, or in family activities.

3. Ability to finance studies.

4. Academic information including program, registration status (full- or part-time), grade point average, expectations of academic performance, intentions for continuing education next fall and institution for further study. Those who were not intending to continue were asked to indicate reasons for discontinuing.

5. Respondent perceptions about College peers, general quality of instruction, physical factors, and support services. Students were asked to indicate their opinions of the advantages and disadvantages of beginning post-secondary studies at the College, and at a university.

6. Preference for transferring, or remaining at the College.

7. Difficulties anticipated if respondents were to continue studies at a university.

8. Degree of respondent certainty in: program choice, career goal, academic success, involvement in campus life at university, persistence or withdrawal, and obtaining a degree.

9. Perceived importance of respondent goals while attending college.

Items were structured to allow respondents to choose alternative(s) which were most appropriate to their situations, and to rate in importance items listed. Ten open-ended questions were included to allow students freedom to individualize their responses. A summary of these responses is contained in Appendix B.

A preliminary form of the questionnaire was completed and pilot tested with six students. As a result of the pilot test, the wording of five questions was changed.

A short follow-up questionnaire was constructed for mailing in October, 1987. This questionnaire determined whether or not students had persisted. If they persisted, respondents were asked to indicate difficulties they encountered in adjusting or transferring to university. If they had not persisted, respondents were asked to indicate reasons for discontinuing their program. No changes were required as a result of the pilot test.

The questonnaires were constructed using the following as resource materials: Small and Konrad, 1986 (questions 8, 10, 13, 14 & 18), Astin, 1975 (questions 4, 5 & 17), University of Alberta Task Force on Mature Students (question 9), and the Department of Secretary State, 1976 (question 1 of Part 2 of second questionnaire). These questions were adapted for the particular College setting, and were subject to revision as a result of the pilot test. Additional materials found helpful in the design of the questionnaire were Statistics Canada Basic Questionnaire Design (1979), Ewell (1984), and Peterson (1968). The remaining questions were developed by the researcher as a result of a review of the literature, and in consultation with others from the College.

Collection of Data

First Questionnaire

Questionnaires were numbered consecutively from one to 244 to allow the researcher to identify the respondents for follow-up purposes. In March, three weeks prior to final examinations, questionnaires were mailed to all of the 244 students registered in the College's second year transfer program. Personalized letters with original signatures accompanied the questionnaires, to explain the nature of the study (Appendix A). All mailings included a postage paid return envelope, addressed to the College.

Responses were received from 86 students. At the end of the final examination period in mid-April, a second copy of the questionnaire with a personalized letter was mailed to the permanent home addresses of the 158 nonrespondents. Forty-six additional responses were received (Table 1).

Table 1

Survey Schedule for Initial and Follow-up Questionnaires

Schedule	Numbers Sent	Date Sent	Responses Received
Initial Questionnaire (N = 244)			
1st Mailing	244	March 18	86
2nd Mailing	158	April 15	46
3rd Mailing	28	Mid-May	28
Undeliverable	14		
Total			160
Follow-Up Questionnaire (N = 160)			
1st Mailing	160	October 1	76
Phone Survey	50	Late October	50
Enrolment Confirmations	34	Early November	34
Total			160

Included among the nonrespondents were 14 students (5.7% of the sample) for whom current local and permanent addresses were not correct and all mailings were returned. A subsequent check of the Registrar's files throughout April and May revealed that these students did not report address changes, and could not be traced through phone numbers or names of next-of-kin left on file.

The researcher was able to contact 29 of the remaining 112 nonrespondents by phone in May, and 28 of those who agreed to participate were mailed a third copy of the questionnaire. These responses resulted in an additional 28 responses.

In total, of the 244 surveyed (including 14 undelivered) 160 responses were received for a response rate of 65.5%.

The following information was obtained from Registrar's files on nonrespondents for later analysis: age, gender, marital status, program in which registered, registration status and cumulative grade point average, so that nonrespondents could be compared to respondents in these characteristics.

Follow-up Questionnaire

The follow-up questionnaire (Appendix A) was mailed October 1, 1987, to permanent home addresses of respondents of the first questionnaire (N = 160). The purpose of the follow-up questionnaire was to determine: whether or not the students had registered in the current fall term; if they had registered, what difficulties they faced in adapting to a new environment; and if they had not registered, their reasons for discontinuing study. Nonpersisters were asked if they valued their College studies and if they intended to resume their studies within the next three years. Persisters were asked if they experienced any transfer problems.

Within the following two months, 76 responses were received. An additional 50 were interviewed by phone, and the registration status of the remaining 34 was obtained through the registrars' offices of Alberta universities and Red Deer College.

Phone survey of nonrespondents: Phone numbers of nonrespondents to the follow-up questionnaire were obtained through faculty, friends, and relatives of the nonrespondents. The phone survey became an essential component of the data collection, since many of the addresses were no longer active. Those contacted by phone were explained the purpose of the follow-up survey, and asked if they would agree to participate. All students contacted agreed to participate. They were then asked their preference to being interviewed by phone or to be mailed a questionnaire. Those agreeing to a phone interview (N = 50) were read the questions on the follow-up questionnaire, and their responses were recorded and tabulated in the same manner as others received in the mail questionnaires.

Analysis of Data

All responses from both the first and second questionnaire were usable. The data collected during the survey were analyzed by frequency and cross tabulation. The data were subdivided into three categories: (a) persisters, (b) non-transferring persisters (i.e., students who returned to the College for the fall, 1987, session), and (c) nonpersisters. Analysis included differences between persisters and nonpersisters. Responses of the total sample are presented in Appendix B.

Chi square analysis was used to test statistical differences in cross tabulations. These were considered significant at the .05 level. T-tests were used to determine the significance of differences between group means. Only statistically significant differences between persisters and nonpersisters are reported in Chapter 4, Research Findings. Because of the small number of nonpersisters (N = 16), and because there were so few differences in persister and nonpersister responses, a decision was made to report data in Chapter 4 for the total population and to report only statistically significant differences between persisters and nonpersisters.

While recognizing that the original group of respondents was not a sample but rather a population of students, these statistical tests were considered appropriate for two reasons: (a) they allowed for an internal statistical analysis of group differences, and (b) they provide potential for inference to a hypothetical population of transfer students in future years at Red Deer College.

Although non-transferring persisters were not identified as a subgroup of interest at the onset, the fact that 35 students could be classified thus prompted an exploratory analysis of distinguishing characteristics. This is reported in Appendix C.

Open question responses (Appendix B) were analyzed as follows:

Comments on quality and importance of factors in the academic environment were analyzed as positive, negative, or as respondent experienced difficulty in making judgements. Comments received to each of the remaining open questions were grouped into categories derived from responses received.

Characteristics of Nonrespondents

To evaluate the representativeness of respondents, they were compared with nonrespondents on those variables available from the College files (i.e., age, gender, marital status, program in which registered, full- or part-time registration status, and cumulative grade point average).

The analysis indicated no significant differences between respondents and nonrespondents except in two respects: cumulative grade point average and programs in which they had registered. In the latter instance, Education students were over-represented and Arts students were under-represented in the respondent group. The mean cumulative grade point average of respondents was 6.6, and of nonrespondents, 5.9 (as measured on a nine-point grading system).

A subsequent follow-up was undertaken of a computer generated random sample ($N = 15$) of nonrespondents to the March questionnaire ($N = 84$) to determine if the persistence rate of nonrespondents was similar to that of respondents. By phone interview in November, it was determined that of the sample of 15 students, 12 were persisters registered in a post-secondary institution, and 3 were nonpersisters (one had withdrawn, and two had stepped out and were planning on registering in the January 1988 term). Chi-square analysis between this random sample and the respondents indicated no significant difference in persistence.

Generally, then, the respondents were typical of the population of interest.

CHAPTER 4

Research Findings

Introduction

This chapter provides a general description of the respondents from the second year university transfer program of the 1986-87 academic year at Red Deer College. The chapter also includes a comparison of persister and nonpersister responses on those variables which were revealed as significantly different. Discussion of the findings is included at the end of each section.

The data in this chapter are based on a response rate of 65.5% (160 respondents from a total population of 244 students). Percentages indicated in the tables are valid percentages, which exclude nonresponses in their calculations. Any discrepancies in the totalling of percentages are due to rounding of figures.

Description of the Respondents

The respondents are described below according to responses in the following categories: background characteristics, academic factors, intentions and goals, perceptions of the College environment, and anticipated difficulties in adjustment on transfer to another institution.

The responses to the initial and follow-up questionnaires, in the form of means and percentages, are detailed in Appendix B.

Background Characteristics

Of 160 respondents, 99 (62.3%) were 21 years of age or younger, and 84 (52.5%) were female. Most (126 or 78.7%) were single, 21 (13.1%) were married, and 13 (8.1%) indicated their marital status as "other" (e.g., living common-law or separated). Only 12 students (7.5%) were in part-time studies, and 148 (92.5%) were registered full-time at the College. The majority (89 or 55.6%) had concerns about their ability to finance their post-secondary education. Fifty-five respondents (34.4%) were working in paid employment an average of 13 hours a week. Table 2 contains these findings in greater detail.

These data suggest a very traditional, homogeneous student population. Almost all of the students were of traditional college age (18 to 24 years), single, and attending College full-time.

Only 19 students (11.9%) were over 30 years of age. Possible reasons for older adults not participating in college include: lack of interest, barriers to access which frequently face adults, and programs of interest not available at Red Deer College.

Although most students had some or major concerns about their abilities to finance their education, only about a third of the respondents were working and these students were working an average of 13 hours a week (almost as much time as many students spend in class). Of the 55 students who were in paid employment, only 7 had no concerns about their ability to finance their education so the majority of students in paid employment probably were working to offset financial distress.

The importance of background characteristics to attrition research has been referred to in Chapter 2. Prior research has shown age to be a significant predictor of transfer attitudes, and students of average college age are more likely than older students to transfer (Cohen, 1985, p. 172). In some institutions, gender has also been related to attrition (Pantages & Creedon, 1978, pp. 57-58), and the importance of marital status appears to depend upon extent of family responsibilities and amount of spousal support available in the home. Financial concerns have been demonstrated to have considerable influence on student persistence, especially when a student's educational experiences are not positive, or early in the program (Tinto, 1982, p. 690). Homogeneity in student type also appears to facilitiate persistence. The data in Table 2 suggest, therefore, that except for financial concerns respondents' background characteristics indicate a probability for persistence.

Social patterns. Respondents were asked to estimate the number of hours per week they spent on various College-related and non-College activities such as discussing studies or socializing with faculty or other College staff, socializing with College friends, and participating in College-organized activities (e.g., student clubs, intramurals, athletics, pubs, etc.). They were also asked to indicate the amount of time per week spent in family-related activity, and in

Table 2

Background Characteristics of Students

Characteristics	Frequency	Per Cent (%)
Age While at RDC (N = 159)		
18 to 21 years	99	62.3
22 to 25 years	24	15.1
26 to 29 years	17	10.7
30 to 33 years	10	6.3
34 to 38 years	5	3.1
40 to 49 years	4	2.5
Gender (N = 160)		
Female	84	52.5
Male	76	47.5
Marital Status While at RDC (N = 160)		
Single	126	78.7
Married	21	13.2
Other	13	8.1
Registration Status (N = 160)		
Full-time (60% of a full program or more)	148	92.5
Part-time (less than 60% of a full program)	12	7.5

Table 2 (continued)

Background Characteristics of Students

Characteristics	Frequency	Per Cent (%)
Concerns about Financing Post-Secondary Education (N = 160)		
No concerns	23	14.4
Some concerns	89	55.6
Major concerns	48	30.0
Working in Paid Employment (N = 160)		
Not working	105	65.6
Working	55	34.4
Hours per Week Working Students are Employed (N = 55)		
1 to 7	14	25.5
8 to 14	23	41.8
15 to 25	14	25.5
35+	4	7.3

socializing with non-College friends. Table 3 indicates how students perceived they apportioned their time.

Social integration of students on campus, based on factors such as friendship support, amount of time spent in non-academic campus activities, and homogeneity of student body, has been demonstrated to have a positive influence on persistence (Pascarella, 1986, p. 100, and others). Based on means, the average number of hours a week in College-related activities, other than studying or attending classes, was 16.7 hours. These data suggest that College-related activities consumed a considerable amount of free time for many students. In their comments concerning the advantages of attending the College, students frequently indicated the importance of friends, ease in making new friends, and the College's close personal atmosphere. The assumption may be made that many were socially well-integrated on campus.

Academic Characteristics

Respondents were registered in seven College programs as shown in Table 4. Most were registered in Education, followed by Arts and Commerce. These three programs accounted for 62.2% of the respondents, and were the transfer programs with the largest enrolments.

Table 3

Reported Hours per Week Students Spend on Various Activities

(N = 160)

Hours per Week	Mean	Mode
Out of class discussing studies or socializing with faculty or other College staff	3.4	1.0
Socializing with College friends	9.6	10.0
In College-organized activities (e.g., student clubs, intramurals, athletics, pubs, etc.)	3.7	0.0
In family-related activities	8.5	0.0
Socializing with non-College friends	6.1	2.0

Table 4

Programs in which Respondents were Enrolled (N = 159)

Program	Respondents	Per Cent
Bachelor of Education	46	28.9
Bachelor of Arts	29	18.2
Bachelor of Commerce	24	15.1
Pre-professional	23	14.5
Bachelor of Arts in Recreation Administration	15	9.4
Bachelor of Science	12	7.5
Bachelor of Fine Arts	10	6.3

Academic integration. Respondents were asked to estimate the number of hours per week they spent on academic activities such as studying and attending classes. Table 5 indicates the estimates of time spent on these activities.

The average number of hours students spent on academic activities such as attending classes, studying and doing assignments was 37.4 hours per week. Information provided in Table 3 and Table 5 indicate that of the average of 54 hours per week reported spent in College-related activities, one third (33.7%) was spent in class; just over one third (35.5%) in studying or working on class assignments; and about one third (30.9%) socializing with College friends. Based on means, academic activities appear to consume a major portion of the respondents' week, and are probably the primary activity of many of the respondents.

Respondents were asked to indicate their cumulative grade point averages, and their responses are shown in Table 6.

A large number of respondents (71 students or 44.4%) had very good to excellent cumulative grade point averages of 7 to 9 on a 9-point grading scale (see Table 6). The modal (43.9%) grade point average was in the range 6.0 to 6.9. Only 3.1% of the respondents had grades 4.9 and below. Most of the respondents were competent students, and the academic achievements of many were excellent.

Academic integration, judged by such factors as students' grades, amount of time spent studying and in study-related activity, and

Table 5

Reported Hours per Week Spent on Academic Activities (N = 160)

Hours per Week	Mean	Mode
In class	18.2	15.0
Studying and working on class assignments	19.2	20.0

Table 6

Cumulative Grade Point Averages

Cumulative GPA	Percentage (%)
8.0 to 8.7	12.1
7.0 to 7.9	32.3
6.0 to 6.9	43.6
5.0 to 5.9	8.9
4.0 to 4.9	1.2
3.0	1.3
2.0	.6

satisfaction with their academic achievements, is a term used to describe the degree of fit or congruence the student experiences in campus academic matters. Academic integration, as explained in Chapter 2, has a positive effect on persistence. Marginal students, with low self-esteem and self-confidence, are more attrition-prone (Munro, 1981, p. 140; Ungar, 1980, p. 68, and others). The data in Tables 5 and 6 suggest that the respondents were academically well integrated on campus.

Academic expectations. To determine student expectations of their academic performance, respondents were asked to rate their academic prospects, and to estimate their chances in the next three years of failing one or more courses, and their chances of achieving an 8 or 9 grade point average. Responses are displayed in Table 7.

Most respondents (67.5%) believed there was no chance or very little chance that they would fail one or more courses after transfer. Half the respondents, in fact, believed there was some chance or a very good chance that they would achieve an 8 or 9 grade point average in the next three years.

Expectations have been shown to play a major role in motivation and persistence (Cohen & others, 1985, p. 97; Cross, 1984, pp. 116-120; Hodges, 1985; Pantages & Creedon, 1978, p. 65; Tinto, 1982, p. 698; and others). Summarizing expectancy-valence motivational theories as they apply to attrition, students who expect to be successful, and to receive rewards of value to them, will put in the effort to achieve and to persist. The data in Table 7 suggest that respondents had

Table 7

Student Expectations of Academic Performance

Category	Percentage (%)
Rating of Academic Performance	
Better than expected	17.5
About what expected	40.6
Did not meet expectations	41.9
Probability of Failing One or More Courses (Mean of 3.1)	
No chance	21.2
Very little chance	46.3
Some chance	29.4
Very good chance	3.1
Probability of Achieving an 8 - 9 GPA in any Year (Mean of 2.5)	
No chance	10.6
Very little chance	39.4
Some chance	38.1
Very good chance	11.9

positive attitudes about their future academic performance. For 41.9% of the respondents, however, their current academic performance was not meeting their own expectations. In view of the competence of these students as demonstrated in Table 6, this may suggest that respondents had set high academic expectations for themselves. It seems that many of these respondents were self-confident in their abilities and probably enjoyed a high self-esteem. An assumption may be made that, based on student expectations of academic performance, respondents were likely to persist.

Perceptions of College Environmental Factors

Respondents were asked to rate their perceptions of the College environment on a 4-point scale (4 = very high, 1 - very low) to determine their satisfaction with the College environment, and to discover areas in which respondents may have experienced mismatch or incongruency with the College environment. Their responses are tabulated in rank order for peers, instruction, physical factors, and academic support services in Tables 8 to 11 respectively.

These ratings in Tables 8 to 11 suggest that students are generally highly or very highly satisfied with the College's environment. General quality of instruction was rated slightly higher than factors related to peers, physical factors of the campus, and support services. Only one rating fell in the lower half of the scale (i.e., "Parking facilities are satisfactory"), and one rating at the mid-point of the scale (i.e., "Study space is satisfactory"). The

Table 8

Perceptions of Peers

Rank	Factor	Mean
2.0	Students vary widely in academic abilities and interests.	3.0
2.0	Students are friendly.	3.0
2.0	Students view the institution positively.	3.0
4	Students respect others.	2.9
5	Students help each other in their course work.	2.8
6.5	Students work hard.	2.7
6.5	Students have high standards of achievement.	2.7
8	Students are enthusiastic about their studies.	2.6
	Average	2.8

Table 9

Perception of General Quality of Instruction

Rank	Factor	Mean
1	Instructors are available to help students with problems.	3.3
3	Class sizes are appropriate.	3.2
3	Instructors are knowledgeable in subject areas.	3.2
5	Courses are well organized.	3.1
5	Course content is up-to-date.	3.1
5	Instructors' academic expectations are high.	3.1
10	Course content is at appropriate level of difficulty	3.0
10	Course content is relevant.	3.0
10	Instructors are genuinely interested in students	3.0
10	Instructors possess teaching skills and techniques	3.0
10	Class discussions are valuable.	3.0
10	Courses are intellectually stimulating.	3.0
10	Instructors encourage initiative.	3.0
14	Assignments are graded fairly.	2.9
15	Reading assignments are valuable	2.7
	Average	3.0

Table 10

Perception of College's Physical Factors

Rank	Factor	Mean
1.5	Extra-curricular facilities are satisfactory.	3.1
1.5	Facilities for athletics and intramurals are satisfactory.	3.1
3.5	Classrooms and laboratories are satisfactory.	3.0
3.5	The physical environment is comfortable.	3.0
5	Class scheduling is convenient.	2.8
6	Lounge space around the College is satisfactory.	2.8
7	Study space is satisfactory.	2.5
8	Parking facilities are satisfactory.	2.3
	Average	2.8

Table 11

Perceptions of College Support Services

Rank	Factor	Mean
2	Extra-curricular activities are satisfactory.	3.0
2	Learning Assistance services are satisfactory.	3.0
2	Library services are satisfactory.	3.0
5	Child care facilities are satisfactory.	2.9
5	Support staff are helpful.	2.9
5	Food services are satisfactory.	2.9
7	Residences are satisfactory.	2.8
9	Counselling services are satisfactory.	2.7
9	Student government is satisfactory.	2.7
9	Orientation to the institution's policies and procedures is satisfactory.	2.7
12	Financial assistance is satisfactory.	2.6
12	Channels for student concerns are satisfactory.	2.6
12	Instructors socialize with students outside class hours.	2.6
	Average	2.8

4

remaining 42 factors were all rated in the upper half of the scale.

Respondents appeared to have positive attitudes about the campus environment, and this suggests that there is a good fit, or match, between respondents and the College. It is interesting to note that the range given responses based on means in Tables 8 to 12 was narrow and somewhat similar between tables, which suggests very few differences on items.

Importance of environmental factors. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of these environmental factors (Tables 12 to 15) to allow determination of significant differences in ratings given to factors reflecting the quality, and factors reflecting the importance, of the College environment. If respondents were to rate the importance of some factors significantly higher than they rated the quality, this would identify areas in which respondents may wish to see improvements in College standards.

All ratings were consistently high and in the upper part of the scale, with the exception of the ranking for importance of "Child care facilities are satisfactory." An assumption might be made that since almost all the respondents were young and single these services might not have been as important to them as were other services. Overall, the highest rated item was "Instructors are knowledgeable in subject area", and the second highest were: "Instructors possess the skills and techniques of teaching" and "Assignments are graded fairly."

In 36 of 44 categories, respondents rated the importance of factors (as shown in Tables 12 to 15) higher than the quality (as shown

Table 12

Importance of Peers as an Academic Environmental Factor

Rank	Factor	Mean
1	Students respect others.	3.3
3	Students view the institution positively.	3.2
3	Students have high standards of achievement.	3.2
3	Students are friendly.	3.2
5	Students work hard.	3.1
5	Students help each other in their course work.	3.1
7	Students are enthusiastic about their studies.	3.0
8	Students vary widely in their academic abilities and interests.	2.6
	Average	3.1

Table 13

Importance of General Quality of Instruction

Rank	Factor	Mean
1	Instructors are knowledgeable in subject area.	3.8
2	Instructors possess the skills and techniques of teaching.	3.7
3	Assignments are graded fairly.	3.6
5.5	Instructors are available to help students with problems.	3.5
5.5	Course content is relevant	3.5
5.5	Instructors are genuinely interested in students.	3.5
5.5	Courses are intellectually stimulating.	3.5
8.5	Courses are well organized.	3.4
8.5	Course content is up-to-date.	3.4
11	Class sizes are appropriate.	3.3
11	Class discussions are valuable.	3.3
11	Instructors encourage initiative.	3.3
13.5	Course content is at appropriate level of difficulty.	3.2
13.5	Instructors academic expectations are high.	3.2
15	Reading assignments are valuable.	2.9
	Average	3.4

Table 14

Importance of Physical Factors in Academic Environment

Rank	Factors	Mean
1.5	Class scheduling is convenient.	3.3
1.5	Study space is satisfactory.	3.3
3.5	The physical environment is comfortable.	3.2
3.5	Classrooms and laboratories are satisfactory.	3.2
5	Parking facilities are satisfactory.	3.1
6	Lounge space around the College is satifactory.	3.0
7	Extra-curricular facilities are satisfactory.	2.9
8	Facilities for athletics and intramurals are satisfactory.	2.7
	Average	3.1

Table 15

Importance of Support Services to Academic Environment

Rank	Factor	Mean
1	Library services are satisfactory.	3.5
3	Financial assistance is satisfactory.	3.1
3	Support staff are helpful.	3.1
3	Counselling services are satisfactory.	3.1
5.5	Channels for student concerns are satisfactory.	3.0
5.5	Orientation to the institution's policies and procedures is satisfactory.	3.0
7.5	Food services are satisfactory.	2.9
7.5	Student government is satisfactory.	2.9
9.5	Learning Assistance services are satisfactory.	2.8
9.5	Extra-curricular activities are satisfactory.	2.8
11.5	Instructors socialize with students outside class hours.	2.5
11.5	Residences are satisfactory.	2.5
13	Child care facilities are satisfactory.	2.2
	Average	2.9

in Tables 8 to 11). The greatest differences in ratings occurred in the following: "Study space is satisfactory" and "Parking facilities are satisfactory" with 0.8 difference between the means for importance when compared with the means for quality; "Instructors possess skills and techniques of teaching" and "Assignments are graded fairly" with 0.7 difference; and "Instructors are knowledgeable in subject area" with 0.6 difference. Since all these factors (with the exception of "Parking facilities are satisfactory") were rated high in quality, this suggests that respondents were not dissatisfied, but placed these factors high in importance.

In 8 of the 44 factors, respondents viewed the quality of the factor higher than the importance. These factors are: "Child care facilities are satisfactory" (0.7 higher in quality than importance); "Students vary widely in academic abilities and interests" and "Facilities for athletics and intramurals are satisfactory" (0.4 difference); "Extracurricular facilities are satisfactory" and "Residences are satisfactory" (0.3 difference); "Extracurricular activities are satisfactory" and "Learning Assistance services are satisfactory" (0.2 difference); and "Instructors socialize with students outside of class" (0.1 difference). Since all factors with one exception were rated above the mid-point of the scale and indicate that respondents saw these factors as important, an assumption might be made that respondents were very satisfied with these factors. The one exception was "Child care services are satisfactory", which was rated in importance at 2.2 (0.3 below the mid-point of the scale). As mentioned above, child care might have been viewed as less important than other factors because it was not a service the majority of these young, single respondents could likely use.

It is interesting to note that respondents rated "Instructors socialize with students outside of class" higher in quality (by 0.1) than in importance. As noted in Chapter 2, prior research has discovered that frequency and quality of informal faculty/student contact had a positive impact on academic integration and thereby influenced persistence, and facilitated students' academic integration (Terenzini & Pascarella, 1977, pp. 37-39). Other researchers also supported the importance of faculty/student interaction (Spady, 1971, p. 59; & others).

It would appear that College faculty provided respondents with a satisfactory level of out of class contact (indicated in Table 3 as a mean of 3.4 hours a week). In many of the open questions, respondents also noted positive comments about the accessibility and helpfulness of faculty (see Appendix B).

Responses to open questions concerning environmental factors. Respondents were asked to comment on the advantages and disadvantages to beginning study at Red Deer College (Appendix B). Comments were grouped into categories derived from responses. Based on numbers of like comments, the following were considered the main advantages: easier transition from high school (44 responses); smaller class sizes more conducive to learning and meeting people (43 responses); college and community are the right size (37 comments); good faculty/student relationships (36 comments); and more personal atmosphere and more care shown for students (33 responses). Based on numbers of like comments, the following were seen as the main disadvantages: having to relocate and adjust at the midpoint of the program (38 responses); concerns about courses transferring (35 responses); and limited course offerings at the College (17 responses).

It would appear from these comments that respondents have positive impressions of the College. They appreciate the smaller, closer, more personal atmosphere which they viewed as conducive to learning and making friends, and the disadvantages they saw in attending the College related predominantly to difficulties involved in transferring and adjusting to another institution.

Respondents were asked, if a degree program were available at Red Deer College, would their preference be to transfer, or to remain at the College. It is interesting to note that 80.1% of the respondents indicated a preference to remain at the College if that option had been available.

Intentions and Goals

To determine student program goals, respondents were asked to rate on a 4-point scale (4 = very high, and 1 = very low) the importance of certain goals to their present program. Table 16 indicates these responses.

Table 16

Importance of Goals to Present Program

Rank	Factor	Mean
1.5	21. To acquire some depth of knowledge in at least one field of interest.	3.4
1.5	8. To achieve high standards of intellectual performance.	3.4
4.5	20. To grow in terms of expanding personal interests, talents and ideas.	3.3
4.5	13. To develop a capacity to influence events affecting my life.	3.3
4.5	14. To develop skills and habits in critical and constructive thinking.	3.3
4.5	17. To develop the ability to undertake self-directed learning.	3.3
9.5	1. To clarify and develop means of achieving personal goals.	3.2
9.5	11. To prepare for advanced study at a college or university.	3.2
9.5	15. To receive preparation for training in a profession (e.g., education, law, medicine).	3.2
9.5	16. To develop the ability to synthesize knowledge from a variety of sources.	3.2
9.5	19. To develop skills and habits of study.	3.2
9.5	12. To achieve high grades in courses.	3.2
13.5	4. To develop habits of life-long learning.	3.1
13.5	10. To develop a deeper level of self-understanding and self-worth.	3.1

Table 16 (continued)

Importance of Goals to Present Program

Rank	Factor	Mean
16	9. To acquire a basic general education in broad fields of knowledge.	3.0
16	6. To develop the social and emotional aspects of my personality.	3.0
16	7. To become open, honest and trusting in relationships with others.	3.0
18.5	3. To receive training in new job skills.	2.9
18.5	5. To receive training for a specific occupational career.	2.9
21	2. To decide on a vocational career.	2.7
21	18. To update existing employment skills.	2.7
21	22. To receive training in a new or emerging career field.	2.7

Students rated two academic goals highest (i.e., "To acquire some depth of knowledge in at least one field of interest" and "To achieve high standards of intellectual performance"), and three employment-related goals lowest. All goals were rated in the upper portion of the scale, which suggests that these students were goal-oriented.

The above goal statements may also be categorized into three groups: academic (i.e., goals numbered 4, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 19, and 21), self-development (i.e., 1, 6, 7, 10, 13, and 20), and employment-related goals (i.e., 2, 3, 5, 15, 18, and 22). Based on an average of group means, students rated academic and self-development goals higher than employment-related goals.

Intentions to Persist. To determine intentions to persist, students were asked in March to indicate if they were planning on continuing studies in the fall, and to indicate the degree of probability (on a 4-point scale) that they would change their major, their career goals, drop- or step-out, be satisfied with university, and obtain a bachelor's degree. They were also asked to indicate the year in which they expected to graduate. Table 17 summarizes student intentions to persist and commitment to studies.

The data show that almost all respondents indicated a high degree of commitment to their studies. Almost all were planning to continue studies in the fall, and most expected to complete their first degree in 1989, the minimum time period for a four-year degree. Most respondents were expecting to be satisfied with university and to obtain a bachelor's degree. Very few felt that there was any

Table 17

Commitment to Studies, Programs and Majors, and Career Goals

Factors	Percentage (%)
Planning on continuing studies in the fall	
Yes	91.9
No	2.5
Undecided	5.6
Expected completion date of first degree	
1987 to 1989	65.3
1990 to 1999	34.7
Probability of changing current program or major	
No chance or very little chance	69.1
Some chance or very good chance	30.8
Probability of changing current career goal	
No chance or very little chance	58.1
Some chance or very good chance	41.8
Probability to dropping out permanently	
No chance or very little chance	94.4
Some chance or very good chance	5.6

Table 17 (continued)

Commitment to Studies, Programs and Majors, and Career Goals

Factors	Percentage (%)
Probability of temporarily discontinuing college/university program	
No chance or very little chance	62.4
Some chance or very good chance	37.5
Probability of getting a bachelor's degree	
No chance or very little chance	3.1
Some chance or very good chance	96.9
Probability of being satisfied with university	
No chance or very little chance	6.3
Some chance or very good chance	93.7

probability that they might drop out permanently or temporarily in the next three years. Most respondents were also committed to their career goals, their programs, and their majors. The data suggest that very few of these respondents were attrition-prone and, therefore, one could anticipate a high rate of persistence from this population.

This assumption was, in fact, confirmed in the findings as reported later in the study. Given that many students had many characteristics and perceptions which prior research attributed to persistence, the high persistence rates reported later are not surprising, even in the light of the lower rates reported in the literature.

Anticipated Difficulties in Adjusting to University

To determine what anxieties students expected to experience in connection with the changes they would be required to make to adjust to the more complex university environment and culture, students were asked to rate 13 factors on a 4-point scale indicating the degree of difficulty they anticipated. Following transfer, persisters were asked a similar question to discover if the difficulties were as anticipated. A comparison of the means of these ratings is shown in Table 18.

Financial difficulties and getting to know faculty were anticipated as being of the greatest concern (3.0 on a 4-point scale). Students were also anticipating high to very high degrees of difficulty in: obtaining recognition, accessing services, securing appropriate accommodation, coping with the academic requirements, getting to know their way around campus, and in choosing appropriate courses. Students were expecting the least amount of difficulty in joining extra-curricular activities, and in coping with the distractions of city life.

In the fall, persisters were asked a similar question concerning degree of difficulty they faced in adjusting to another institution. In all variables with one exception, persisters ranked difficulties experienced after transfer as lower than difficulties anticipated by all respondents prior to transfer. (The one exception was in "Joining extra-curricular activities" rated 2.1 before transfer and 2.2 after transfer.) Most difficulties after transfer were experienced in obtaining recognition (2.8), getting to know faculty (2.8), and coping financially with increased costs (2.8). Statistically significant differences in means were found in five variables, as shown in Table 18. The data in Table 18 suggest that prior to transfer respondents anticipated more difficulties in adjustment than persisters actually experienced after transfer.

While the articulation process between College and provincial universities appears to be functioning well for almost all persisters, and while persisiters seem to experience few difficulties in relocating and in orienting themselves physically and academically to the universities, respondents' write in comments prior to transfer revealed that the majority were overwhelmed and intimidated by the size of the universities, indicative of potential transfer shock syndrome. In an open question, respondents were asked to comment on the advantages and disadvantages of beginning studies at a university.

Table 18

Anticipated Difficulties in Adjusting to University

Rank for March Responses	Factor	March Mean (N = 160)	October Mean (N = 109)
1.5	Coping financially with increased costs	3.0	2.8*
1.5	Getting to know faculty	3.0	2.8
3	Obtaining recognition	2.9	2.8
4.5	Accessing services	2.7	2.3*
4.5	Securing appropriate accommodation	2.7	2.2*
7	Choosing appropriate courses	2.6	2.4
7	Coping with academic requirements	2.6	2.4
7	Getting to know my way around campus	2.6	2.0*
9.5	Getting to know my way around the city	2.5	2.2*
9.5	Making new friends	2.5	2.2
11	Assuming more responsibility for my program	2.4	2.3
12.5	Coping with distractions of city life	2.2	2.1
12.5	Joining extra-curricular activities	2.2	2.2

*$p \leq .05$

Many viewed their entrance to university with some trepidation, and the words most frequently used to describe these feelings (93 comments) were "overwhelming," "intimidating," "a shock," "cold and impersonal," "the student is 'just a number'," and "too large and confusing." They recognized the advantages of the universities offering them a wider range of courses and programs, and that beginning at university would avoid the later trauma of having to transfer, but their comments suggested that they considered the adjustment to such a different culture as very difficult. Although most transfer students adjust after a period of transfer shock, some of these students are liable to experience feelings of mismatch with the complex environment of the multiversity for some time following transfer.

Comparison of Characteristics: Persisters and Nonpersisters

Persisters were distinguished from nonpersisters by means of a follow-up survey by mail and telephone in October, 1987. The status of the respondents is shown in Table 19.

Responses to the second survey in October indicated that of the 160 respondents to the first survey in March, 109 had transferred to other institutions (persisters), and 16 had discontinued studies (nonpersisters). The remainder (35) had re-registered at Red Deer

Table 19

Academic Status of Respondents in Fall, 1987

Institution	Persisters	Nonpersisters	Continuing	Total
University of Alberta	70	---	---	70
University of Calgary	26	---	---	26
Lethbridge University	1	---	---	1
Athabasca University	2	---	---	2
Red Deer College	---	---	35	35
Other institutions	10	---	---	10
Not registered	---	16	---	16
Total	109	16	35	160

College.

The following section draws a comparison between persisters and nonpersisters in the following categories: background characteristics, academic characteristics, student perceptions of the College environment, intentions and goals, and anticipated difficulties in adjusting to university. Chi-square analysis and t-tests were used to check for significant differences.

Background Characteristics

A comparison of background characteristics of persisters and nonpersisters was performed through Chi-square and t-tests. There were no statistically significant differences between persisters and nonpersisters in age, gender, marital status, registration status (full- or part-time), hours per week working in paid employment, concern about ability to finance their post-secondary education, or how they apportioned their time in College-related social activities.

A statistically significant difference was found between persisters and nonpersisters in their perceived probability of getting a job in the next three years to pay for their educational expenses ($p \leq 0.01$). For 72.2% of the persisters, and for 87.5% of the nonpersisters, the perceived probability was high.

A statistically significant difference was also found between persisters and nonpersisters in the degree of difficulty they foresaw in accessing university services (e.g., obtaining special help) if they were to transfer to a university. Persisters believed this would be more difficult than did nonpersisters.

Because the comparison of background characteristics revealed so few statistically significant differences between persisters and nonpersisters, generally one might assume that persisters and nonpersisters have similar background characteristics.

Academic Characteristics

Persisters were compared to nonpersisters in academic characteristics. There were no statistically significant differences between persisters and nonpersisters in cumulative grade point average, program in which registered, hours per week in academic activities, and self-ratings of academic performance.

There were, however, statistically significant differences in two other academic factors. Nonpersisters rated more highly than persisters the possibility that they would fail one or more credit courses over the next three years ($p<.05$). Persisters, more so than nonpersisters, believed that there was a chance that they would achieve an 8 or 9 grade point average in any year ($p<.05$).

Intentions and Goals

Intentions. Persisters were compared to nonpersisters in intentions to continue studies in the fall, expected year of completion of first degree, and probability of temporarily discontinuing college

Table 20

Differences Between Persisters and Nonpersisters in Intentions

Intentions	Percentage Persisters (N = 109)	Percentage Nonpersisters (N = 16)
Planning on continuing studies in the fall (Chi square 21.9, p≤.01)		
Yes	96.3	68.8
No	2.8	6.3
Undecided	0.9	25.0
Expected year of completion of first degree (Chi square 22.6, p≤.01)		
1987	0.0	7.1*
1988	2.8	0.0
1989	74.8	35.7
1990	16.8	42.9
1991	5.6	7.1
1992	0.0	7.1
Probability of temporarily discontinuing college or university program in the next three years (*t* = -3.67, p≤.01)		
No chance	33.9	18.8
Very little chance	38.5	6.3
Some chance	20.2	37.5
Very good chance	7.3	37.5
Mean**	2.0	2.9

*Note: One respondent had misread this question as could not have earned sufficient credits to graduate by 1987.

**Means calculated on a scale of one (no chance) to four (very good chance) or university in the next three years. There were no statistically significant differences in the following variables: likelihood of changing career goals, or academic program, or major; and likelihood of dropping out, or of obtaining a bachelor's degree. There were no significant differences between persisters and nonpersisters in rankings given to 18 of the goal statements.

Statistically significant differences were found in the following items: student plans on continuing studies in the fall, year in which they expected to receive their first degree, and chance of temporarily discontinuing their education (see Table 20). A smaller percentage of nonpersisters than of persisters expected to continue their studies in the fall. Nonpersisters were anticipating taking longer to complete their first degree, and more so than persisters believed it was probable that they might temporarily discontinue college or university in the next three years.

Goals. Persisters and nonpersisters were compared in their ratings of 22 goal statements. Table 21 lists four goals for which there were statistically significant differences in means between persisters and nonpersisters.

In each instance, persisters ranked the importance of goals higher than did nonpersisters. Based on means, persisters also ranked other goal statements slightly higher than did nonpersisters, which suggests that persisters may be slightly more goal-oriented than nonpersisters. Academic goals were rated highest by persisters, while nonpersisters rated highest both self-development and academic goals.

Table 21

Significant Differences in Persister and Nonpersister Ranking of Goals

Goal Statements	Persisters' Mean	Nonpersisters' Mean	t	p
To develop habits of life-long learning	3.2	2.7	2.78	≤.01
To achieve high grades in courses	3.3	2.9	2.27	≤.05
To develop skills and habits of study	3.2	2.9	2.05	≤.05
To decide on a vocational career	2.9	2.3	2.19	≤.05

Perceptions of the Environment

Persisters and nonpersisters in general shared the same perceptions of the quality and importance of College environmental factors. Of the 88 items ranked in quality and in importance, only 3 statistically significant differences were found in quality items and 2 in importance. These are listed in Tables 22 and 23.

The data indicate that there were few differences in persister and nonpersister responses concerning the College environment, and that responses were generally the same. The only other item ranked lower by nonpersisters than persisters was: "Class sizes are appropriate". Since some of the nonpersisters indicated academic reasons for discontinuing studies (Table 25), this suggests that some may have thought they would have benefitted from smaller class sizes and more personal attention.

Discussion of Differences Between Persisters and Nonpersisters

Although persisters and nonpersisters were similar in background characteristics and perceptions of the quality and importance of environmental factors, there were interesting differences in academic characteristics, intentions and goals. Two general impressions emerge.

The first impression is that nonpersisters may have perceived themselves as noncontinuous students. Nonpersisters, more so than persisters, perceived a probability of getting a job within three years to pay for educational expenses, expected to take longer to complete their first degree, and expected to temporarily discontinue their

Table 22

Differences in Persisters' and Nonpersisters' Perceptions of the College Environment

Perception	Persister Mean	Nonpersister Mean	t	p
Instructors are knowledgeable in subject area	3.2	3.6	-2.63	$\leq .01$
Class sizes are appropriate	3.3	3.0	2.06	$\leq .05$
Financial assistance is satisfactory	2.6	2.1	2.08	$\leq .05$

Table 23

Differences in the Importance Persisters and Nonpersisters Place on Environmental Factors

Environmental Factors	Persister Mean	Nonpersister Mean	t	p
Parking facilities are satisfactory	3.0	3.5	-2.19	$\leq .01$
Channels for student concerns are satisfactory	3.0	3.3	-2.08	$\leq .05$

program. An assumption may be made that nonpersisters did not view their degree programs as being completed in a continuous, lockstep fashion, whereas persisters generally intended to complete their program without interruption. An assumption might also be made that nonpersisters were more likely than persisters to be lured from studies by jobs than were persisters. The research of Ungar (1980), Knoell (1982, p. 20) and others indicated that job availability was a frequent deterrent to transfer or persistence, and for some of the nonpersisters this apparently was true. Further, nonpersisters ranked lower than persisters "Financial assistance is satisfactory" which suggests that nonpersisters may have been more stressed by their financial difficulties. "Lack of financial support to continue" was the third ranked reason for their discontinuing studies.

A second impression is that persisters had more confidence than nonpersisters in their academic potential. Many nonpersisters were reexamining their career goals, or questioning the value of obtaining a degree, or needing a break in their studies. Possibly some of these nonpersisters were in a transition period in their psychosocial development, facing conflicts and crises which sometimes accompany developmental challenges. They may have been reevaluating former aspects of self-concept, and as a result were questioning not only their academic goals but also their academic abilities.

In general, however, there were few differences between nonpersisters and persisters. Compared on over 190 item responses, nonpersisters differed from persisters in only 16 items, at a statistically significant level.

The reasons given by nonpersisters for dropping out, reported later in this chapter, lend credence to these impressions.

Follow-Up of Persisters

In the October follow-up survey, persisters were asked to identify the difficulties they experienced in adapting to a new institution. These were reported in Table 18 and it was concluded that persisters generally experienced less difficulty than they anticipated. The most serious problems appeared to be in connection with obtaining recognition, and in personal and financial adjustments required to adapt to the larger campus.

In the October follow-up survey, persisters were asked two questions concerning the transfer process. In the first question, they were asked if they had experienced difficulty obtaining credit for transfer courses completed at the College. Based on 100 responses to this question, 22 answered in the affirmative (see Appendix B). Of the 22 indicating that they had difficulty, eight noted that they had not received credit for courses listed in the Transfer Guide, two students were moved from third year status at RDC to second year at university, one did not like the course equivalents granted by his out-of-province university, one registered late and course selection was limited, one had difficulty in obtaining a reference letter from a College department head, and one changed faculties.

In the second question, persisters were asked to comment generally on transfer experiences: 107 responses are categorized in Table 24.

Table 24

Difficulties Indicated by Persisters on Transfer to University

Categories	Frequency
No problems, or University staff helpful	17
Registration/admission process difficult	13
Received inappropriate advisement prior to transfer	13
Impact of larger campus, impersonality, overcrowding	12
Other difficulties	12
Positive comments about the College	10
Did not get credit for courses in the Transfer Guide	8
Homesickness, miss friends, College, or Red Deer	7
Student changed program, or institution, and experienced transfer problems	6
Difficulty in course selection, or courses filled	5
Problems adjusting to a larger city	4

System problems were the most prevalent, and were indicated in 45 responses. System problems included incorrect advisement, difficulties related to registration, obtaining transfer credit, changing programs, and course selection. Adjustment difficulties (e.g., homesickness, large classes, large city, etc.) were mentioned by 23 persisters. Some system problems are no doubt inevitable, however, the number of comments relating to system problems suggest that the institutions could better serve the transfer students by more closely monitoring their transfer experiences and addressing areas of concern.

Follow-up of Nonpersisters

In the October mail-out survey, nonpersisters were asked to indicate on a 4-point scale (4 = very high, and 1 = very low) the importance of reasons for discontinuing their studies. These responses are indicated in Table 25 in rank order by means.

The highest rated reason was the need for a break in studies, followed by obtained a job, financial pressures, and questioning the value of a degree.

Of the nonpersisters, 70.6% indicated that they intended to continue in post-secondary studies within the next three years. All the respondents believed that their College studies had been of value to them. These data suggest that the nonpersisters had positive attitudes about their educational experiences, and most perceived themselves as temporary step-outs, rather than dropouts. These students

Table 25

Reasons for Discontinuing Studies

Rank	Reasons	Means
1	Need for a break in my studies	2.8
2	Obtained a desirable job	2.5
3.5	Lack financial support to continue	2.3
3.5	Question value of obtaining a degree	2.3
6	Change of career goals	2.0
6	Uncertain about career goals	2.0
6	Not accepted to the program of my choice by the university	2.0
8	Grades too low	1.9
9	Have met my educational goals	1.6
10	Unable to relocate	1.4
11	Encouraged to discontinue by someone of importance to me	1.2
12	Poor health	1.1

appeared to be well integrated socially and academically on the College campus, and the incidence of their withdrawal was probably more due to unavoidable circumstances or to reassessment of their career goals than to their experience of College.

Withdrawal from studies is an appropriate and positive decision for some students, and may result from careful consideration of life goals and abilities. The attrition experienced at the College in this student group was low and should certainly be considered to be within acceptable levels.

Summary of Findings

Respondents are described as being fairly homogeneous in characteristics. Almost all were young, single, and attending College full-time. Most were concerned about their abilities to finance their studies, and one-third were working an average of 13 hours a week. These students appeared to be socially and academically well-integrated in the College, and College-related activities occupied a major portion of their week. Almost all were competent students, and 44.4% were very good students scoring grade point averages in the 7 to 9 range on a 9-point grading system. They indicated a commitment to their studies, and had confidence in their potential to perform academically.

Respondents appeared to have positive opinions about the College environment, and ranked the general quality of instruction high. Faculty were viewed as accessible, and informal faculty contact out of class was very satisfactory. In their write-in comments about the

College, students most frequently mentioned small class sizes as conducive to learning and meeting people, the College being the right size, good faculty/student relationships, personal and caring attention, and friendly atmosphere. They viewed the College as easing the high school to university transition, but many were concerned about having to transfer to a larger, more complex environment of a university with the possible loss of credits earned. Respondents appeared to experience a good fit with the College environment, and their positive attitudes probably did much to facilitate persistence.

Only 16 out of 160 students discontinued studies after second year, and the majority were planning on resuming studies in the next three years. All nonpersisters indicated that they viewed their College education as being valuable. Reasons given for nonpersistence were either situational (poor health, lack of finances, not accepted to their first choice program by the university, etc.), or attitudinal (reassessing their career and educational goals, needing a break in their studies, uncertain about the value of obtaining a degree, etc.) It is unlikely that any intervention on the part of the College could have changed these students' decisions to discontinue their studies.

Nonpersisters were compared to persisters, and very few statistically significant differences were found. This suggests that nonpersisters and persisters were generally the same. Most prevalent differences were that the nonpersisters viewed themselves as noncontinuing students, whereas persisters anticipated completing their programs in lockstep fashion. Also nonpersisters appeared to have less confidence in their academic abilities than did persisters.

The top ranked difficulties respondents anticipated in March on transfer to the university, and which persisters actually experienced after transfer were: coping financially with the increased costs, obtaining recognition, and getting to know faculty. System problems (e.g., registration difficulties, obtaining credit for courses taken, etc.) and adjustment problems (e.g., homesickness, difficulties in making new friends, coping with the larger, more complex and impersonal university environment, etc.) were frequent comments students made. Only 22 of 109 students indicated that they experienced transfer problems, and of these only 8 related to obtaining transfer credit for courses. In general, then, it appears that the mechanics of the transfer process were operating relatively smoothly.

Persisters appeared to have difficulties in adjustment similar to those of university freshmen. Comments indicated that some transfer students were initially overwhelmed by the complexity and size of the multiversity, and were homesick for their families, friends, and the College. In the words of one student: "The hardest part of all was leaving my home town for the first time since birth, leaving my friends, boyfriend, and family, and quitting the part-time job I've had for six years. The university is so overwhelming--it's so hard to adapt to such a different environment!"

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter addresses the research questions posed in Chapter 1. The implications of this research are discussed, and recommendations offered for further research or action.

This research was directed toward determining the characteristics of the second year university transfer class at Red Deer College, and tracking these students into the fall to learn of their experiences at receiving institutions. If they discontinued their studies, their reasons for not continuing were discovered. The characteristics of nonpersisters were compared with those of persisters to determine which characteristics might be associated with nonpersistence. The conclusions of the research are discussed below.

Conclusions

Transfer Students' Background Characteristics

This population had many characteristics of traditional college students. Most were young (21 years of age or younger), single, and slightly more than half (52.5%) were female. Almost all the students (92.5%) were registered full-time in studies. Since many of the background characteristics of these students were similar, this would indicate a homogeneous student group. This homogeniety enhances integration, and thus persistence (Astin, 1975, pp. 144-145), and may have been indirectly a factor in the high transfer rates among these students.

Financial concerns were prevalent among respondents. Most (85.6%) had some concerns or major concerns about their abilities to finance their post-secondary education. Financial difficulties have been shown to have a major impact on student persistence (Aitken, 1982, p. 41; Astin, 1975, p. 69; Jones, Forrester & Dennison, 1980, p. 55; Tinto, 1982, p. 690; and others), and in this study "Lack of finances" was the third ranked reason for nonpersistence. That most students persisted despite financial concerns is interesting. Tinto (1982, p. 690) indicated that students who regard their educational experiences as positive are more likely to persist even when confronted with financial difficulties. This may have been the situation for some of these students.

Some research has noted the importance to persistence of student employment. Astin (1975, p. 87) and American College Testing Service (1982, p. 11) found that any form of on- or off-campus employment improves a student's chances of completing college. In this study, more than one third (34.4%) of the respondents were employed, working a mean of 13 hours a week, and almost as many hours as most students were spending in class. For many of these students, employment was probably important to relieve their financial difficulties. Of the 55 students in paid employment, only seven were not experiencing financial concerns.

Prior research has indicated the importance to persistence of students' social integration (Pascarella, 1986, p. 100, & others). These respondents reported spending 16.7 hours a week (mean) or 11.0 hours a week (mode) out of class in College-related activities, other than studying or attending classes. Most of this time involved socializing with friends or participating in College-organized activities. Students on average spent more time socializing with College friends than with non-College friends.

The data suggest that these students were well integrated socially on the campus.

Based on means, students spent 8.5 hours per week in family-related activity. The mode of 0.0, however, suggests that family-related activity consumes considerably more than these 8.5 hours per week for many respondents. Distance from home may have been a factor for those students who indicated spending no time with their families, as many respondents' families lived outside of Red Deer.

Transfer Students' Academic Characteristics

Respondents were registered in all College transfer programs, but the main ones were: Education, Fine Arts, Science and Pre-professional programs.

Academic integration has a positive effect on persistence. Academic integration involves such factors as time spent in class and class-related activity, academic achievements, and satisfaction with academic performance. In this study, students spent on average 37.4 hours a week in class, studying and working on class assignments. Almost half the population (71 students or 44.4%) had very good to excellent cumulative grade point averages of 7 to 9 on a 9-point grading scale. Only 3 students (1.9%) had averages below the pass level, and 2 (1.2%) were borderline passes.

These data indicate that academic activity consumed a major portion of the student week, and that students were performing satisfactorily in their studies, and were probably well integrated academically on campus.

Student expectations of academic performance play a major role in motivation and persistence (Cohen & others, 1985, p. 97; Cross, 1984, pp. 116-120; Hodges, 1985; Pantages & Creedon, 1978, p. 65; Tinto, 1982, p. 698; & others). High expectations are also an indication of student self-confidence in ability.

Many students in this study had high expectations of their academic performance. Although the academic performance of most students was satisfactory, 67 students (41.9%) viewed their academic performance as not meeting their own expectations. Only 28 (17.5%) indicated that they were performing better than they had expected, and many of these were female students who may have underestimated their abilities. Only 53 students (32.5%) felt there was any probability that they might fail one or more courses, and half (80 students) thought there was a possibility that they might achieve an 8 or 9 grade point average in the next three years. These data suggest that the majority of students had self-confidence in their abilities, and high expectations of their performance.

Quality and Importance of Environmental Factors

The way in which students perceive the campus environment can have an influence on their commitment to the institition and to goals, and indirectly influence persistence. Positive attitudes about the campus environment enhance feelings of belonging, and hence persistence.

Respondents' perceptions of the quality of the College environment appeared to be generally high or very high. The means of the rankings students gave to perceptions of peers, general quality of instruction, the College's physical characteristics, and support services were consistently high. All ratings with the exception of "Parking is satisfactory" were ranked at or above the mid-point of the scale. Only one factor was ranked at the mid-point of the scale: "Study space is satisfactory."

The average of the means for general quality of instruction was ranked highest at 3.0; peers, support services, and physical characteristics of the campus were rated at 2.8.

The students' perceptions of the importance of these 44 factors were also measured, and all rankings were in the upper part of the scale with the exception of "Child care facilities are satisfactory." These services may have been ranked as less important since they would not have been used by a large majority of this population.

Students ranked highest "Instructors are knowledgeable in subject area," and next highest "Instructors possess the skills and techniques of teaching" and "Assignments are graded fairly."

The data appear to indicate that transfer students were satisfied with the College environment and, based on an average of means, general quality of instruction was the environmental factor most important to them.

Respondents ranked "Instructors socialize with students outside of class" high in both quality and importance (2.6 and 2.5 respectively). This is an interesting finding in the light of prior research which indicates that frequency and quality of informal faculty/student contact have a positive impact on both academic and social integration, enhancing student persistence (Terenzini & Pascarella, 1977, pp. 37-39; Spady, 1971, p. 59; & others). Respondents appeared to be satisfied with the level of out of class contact with faculty (mean of 3.4 hours a week). In their write-in comments, 66 students indicated good faculty/student relationships were an advantage of attending Red Deer College. They also noted as advantages the accessibility of faculty, the opportunity to socialize with faculty after class, and the personal, caring attention most faculty gave to the students. In addition, students also ranked faculty high to very high in being available to help students with problems. Apparently the faculty of Red Deer College played an important role in integrating students, and facilitating persistence.

Respondents appear to have very positive attitudes toward the College. If a degree program were available at the College, 80.1% of the respondents indicated a preference to remain at the College rather than transfer to another institution to complete their program.

Student Goals and Intentions

Many researchers on attrition have indicated that student commitment to educational goals, to program or to major, has an impact on persistence (Bean, 1982, p. 24; Dunphy & Digiorgio, 1985, p. 466; Gilbert & Gomme, 1986, p. 232; Munro, 1981; Pantages & Creedon, 1978, p. 65; Spady, 1970, p. 73; Tinto, 1982, pp. 21-23; Titley & Titley, 1985, p. 465; & others).

The data suggest that almost all students indicated a high degree of commitment to their studies. In the March survey, all but 13 students (8.1%) were planning on continuing their studies in the fall, and most expected to obtain their degree in 1989. Only 4 (2.5%) had decided not to resume their studies in the fall term, and 9 (5.6%) were undecided.

Students expected to be satisfied with university, and very few expected to step out or drop out in the next three years. Most students were committed to their career goals, their programs, and their majors.

Academic and self-development goals were most important to these students. The highest overall rankings were: to acquire some depth of knowledge in at least one field of interest, and to achieve high standards of intellectual performance. Employment-related goals ranked lowest.

Transfer Students' Satisfaction with College

Students appeared to be satisfied with their College experience. High rankings on the perception of the envionment, the extent of their involvement in College-related activities, and the large number of positive comments about the College (over 300) written in response to open-ended questions attest to their satisfaction. Even among the nonpersisters, positive attitudes prevailed. All of the nonpersisters indicated that their studies had been of value to them, and only a few were not planning on resuming their studies in the next three years.

Persistence/Nonpersistence Outcomes Among Transfer Students

While prior research in the U.S. and Canada suggests that college attrition at the point of transfer is high, this was not the experience at Red Deer College. The attrition rate was 10% of respondents. Only 16 students dropped out at the end of second year in the College university transfer program, while 109 transferred to other institutions.

No causal relationships can be determined from this descriptive study, but it is possible that the traditional nature of this clientele, their homogeneity, their apparent satisfaction with the academic environment, their intentions to persist, and the high ranking they gave to academic goals contributed to persistence.

Most of the 16 nonpersisters were considering discontinuing studies at the time of the March survey. The majority of nonpersisters (70.6%) viewed themselves as step outs, and were planning to continue their post-secondary studies within the next three years.

Reasons for Nonpersistence

The highest ranked reasons for nonpersistence was: "Need for a break in my studies." The second highest rated factor was: "Obtained a desirable job," and the third: "Lack the financial support to continue."

Half the nonpersisters' reasons for withdrawal could be categorized as situational (e.g., financial difficulties, draw of an attractive job, serious health problems, or not accepted by the university). For others, their reasons could be categorized as attitudinal (e.g., need to rethink their career/life plans, or tired of studying.) For some in this category, their time in College may have been a period of exploration and transition in their psychological development. It is unlikely that any action on the part of the College could have prevented these withdrawals.

Transfer Difficulties Encountered by Persisters

Twenty-two of the persisters indicated that they experienced some difficulties in receiving credit for courses completed at the College: eight indicated that they had not received credit for courses listed in the Provincial Transfer Guide. Despite the guaranteed articulation between Alberta colleges and universities, a few students were experiencing difficulties in obtaining credit for College courses. Some students placed blame for transfer difficulties on the course counselling they had received at the College. Others indicated that the universities were not consistently following the Guide. Most of the difficulties persisters experienced were system problems.

In March the population was asked to rank in importance 13 factors, indicating perceived degree of difficulty respondents anticipated in adjusting to transfer to a university. Students were anticipating high to very high levels of difficulty in seven of the factors. Coping with the increased costs and getting to know faculty were the greatest concerns followed by obtaining recognition.

In October, persisters, in response to a similar question, ranked highest: coping financially with increased costs, obtaining recognition, and getting to know faculty. Only these three factors were above the mid-point on the scale in the October survey. These data suggest that the difficulties experienced by persisters on transfer are not as severe as those anticipated by respondents prior to transfer.

Differences Distinguished Between Persisters and Nonpersisters

There were very few statistically significant differences between persisters and nonpersisters. Both groups had similar backgrounds and academic characteristics, with the exception that persisters appeared to have more confidence in their academic ability than nonpersisters.

Nonpersisters tended to rank goal statements slightly lower than persisters which suggests that persisters may be more goal-oriented than nonpersisters. Nonpersisters had higher expectations of stepping out, and expected to take longer to complete their degree programs.

Persisters and nonpersisters in general shared the same perceptions of the quality and importance of College environmental factors.

Recommendations

These research results lead to several recommendations.

1. The College should monitor carefully the transfer process, investigating the cases of students who do not receive credit for courses taken at the College to determine and resolve problems. The credibility of the College's transfer program rests to a large extent on the assurance (as given in the Provincial Transfer Guide) that transfer courses do transfer. Both the College advisement process and the universities' acceptance of credits should be regularly monitored through periodic follow-up of transfer students.

2. The universities should consider offering orientation programs for third year freshmen, or alternatively including these students in the appropriate portions of the freshmen orientation program. Where such orientation programs are available, the College and the universities should ensure that they are promoted to these transfer students. The College should also provide information on the transfer process and investigate the feasibility of arranging early spring orientation visits to the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary in an attempt to reduce transfer student anxieties. The College should well advertise the universities' application deadlines to facilitate students' early admission, as this will help to ensure that transfer students have an adequate course selection.

3. Students appeared to encounter few problems in the transfer process, and indications were that the process functions well. There are, however, some students who have family and work commitments in the Red Deer area, and others who cannot transfer for a variety of reasons. Further, an overwhelming majority of students indicated that they would

prefer to remain at the College, if the degree program of interest were offered. The College should, therefore, continue to seek and to facilitate credit course brokering arrangements with universities, or seek degree-granting status, in order to improve accessibility to those students of the area who cannot, or prefer not to, leave Central Alberta. Improving the third and fourth year course offerings would considerably decrease the costs borne by students, and might prove an asset in attracting older, nontraditional students to College transfer programs.

4. It is unlikely that the federal or provincial economy will bear all the direct and indirect educational costs of post-secondary education. The reality is that financial barriers to access, despite federal student loans and provincial grants and loans, still remain. The College should attempt to be informed of students' financial difficulties and Student Services staff should assume when appropriate an active student advocacy role with sponsoring agencies, including the Student Finance Board. The College should also seek to increase student bursary support presently provided by the local community, to help offset students' financial crises. This is especially important to broadening College clientele.

5. The College experienced in 1987 a low attrition rate among second year university transfer students. It would be useful to confirm this finding in future surveys. It would also be useful to follow-up nonpersisters, many of whom intended to resume their studies in the next few years, to determine how many do so.

6. The College university transfer programs predominantly attract young students who are recent high school leavers, and there appears to be a good College/student fit with this group. The College, aware that high school students are the main clientele for university transfer programs, should continue to maintain a visible presence in the feeder high schools. Should the College wish to extend its target market for these programs, then further research would be required to determine those College characteristics which should be adapted to accommodate older, non-traditional students.

7. College university transfer students seemed to place a high value on the teaching skills of faculty and their accessibility to students. The College should continue to attract and maintain a faculty with good teaching skills and a keen interest in students, and encourage and support faculty/student informal interaction.

8. The university transfer program students in this one-year study appeared to be good students who were likely to persist in their studies to the degree level. Possible areas of future research might include a study of persisters' perceptions of the College and universities one or more years after transferring, adapting to a more sophisticated and complex culture, and overcoming transfer shock. Such a study would be useful to determine the time required to adjust to a new environment, and to determine (after students are familiar with the university) how they regard their earlier College experiences.

9. In the conceptual framework, it was hypothesized that student satisfaction with educational experiences would influence persistence and nonpersistence decisions. The results of this study suggest that this was not, in fact, the case. Nonpersisters appeared to be as satisfied with educational experiences as persisters.

It would also be interesting to replicate this study at other Alberta colleges to determine if the characteristics and persistence rates are similar to the Red Deer College experience. The traditional nature of students at this college may be quite unlike that at other colleges. It may be useful to discover if transfer programs at other colleges provide access to university to older, more non-traditional students than found to be the case at Red Deer College. Very little is presently known about attrition in Canadian community colleges, and about attrition in university transfer programs in particular.

Comparisons between these institutional transfer rates are only useful if taken in context, however, as persistence will depend to some extent on the nature and homogeneity of the student body, institutional characteristics, and the emphasis the institution places on university transfer. Reasons for withdrawal must also be considered in determining acceptable levels of attrition, and these levels will be institution specific. Based on numbers and reasons given for withdrawal, however, the College's 1987 transfer rate was certainly at an acceptable level.

This research has demonstrated that this College performs a very useful function in extending post-secondary opportunity to Central Albertans, and especially to Albertans 18 to 25 years old who find the College a very useful academic, social and financial transition from high school to university. The College appears to give students a very positive educational experience, and this experience helps students to persist in their studies.

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APPENDIX A

Sample letters and the questionnaires
sent to students

RED DEER COLLEGE
rdc

Box 5005
Red Deer, Alberta T4N 5H5
Telephone (403) 342-3300

18 March 1987

[Name]
[Address]
[Town, Province]
[Postal Code]

Dear [First Name]:

I am sending the attached survey to College students registered in the second year university transfer programs. The basic purpose of the survey is to determine characteristics of persisting and nonpersisting students. A follow-up survey will be sent to you in October to determine whether or not you are continuing your post-secondary education.

This research will be particularly valuable in giving the College useful feedback on student goals, perceptions of the College, and concerns about transferring. The information will be important in guiding our efforts to improve students' College experiences, as well as services we offer you. This research is being undertaken as a College project, and will complete my thesis requirements for a Masters of Education degree from the University of Alberta.

The survey should take about twenty minutes to complete, and first impressions are important. Please seal your response in the enclosed envelope and either mail it, or return it to the Switchboard Office, by April 6. I would appreciate an early response as other phases of this research cannot be carried out until statistical analysis of the survey data is completed. Your response will be used only for statistical research, and will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Thank you for your valuable assistance. I will certainly appreciate your participation in the study.

I wish you success in your examinations next month.

Sincerely,

Diane Tyler
Dean, Student Services

RED DEER COLLEGE

rdc

Box 5005
Red Deer, Alberta T4N 5H5
Telephone (403) 342-3300

[Name]
[Address]
[Town, Province]
[Postal Code]

Dear [First Name]:

About two weeks ago a College survey was sent to you. Your response is very important to a research project intended to improve College services and experiences of future students, and I do hope you will participate. This research is endorsed as a College project supporting an institutional goal. It is also being supported by senior administration, the executive of the College Faculty Association, and the College Student Association President.

I would like very much to hear from you as soon as possible. In case you have misplaced the first survey, a second copy along with a return envelope is enclosed. The survey will only take about 20 minutes of your time, and all responses will be kept strictly confidential. Please drop the questionnaire off at the College Switchboard, or mail it to the College. No postage is necessary.

If you are preoccupied with your studies for examinations, and do not wish to take the time to complete this survey now, please complete and return it to me as soon as possible after examinations. I will look forward to receiving your response at your earliest convenience.

If you have already sent in your reply, please ignore this letter. I thank you sincerely for your participation in this survey, and I wish you every success in the the examinations!

Yours truly,

Diane Tyler
Dean, Student Services

RED DEER COLLEGE

Box 5005
Red Deer, Alberta T4N 5H5
Telephone (403) 342-3300

October 1, 1987

[Name]
[Address]
[Town, Province]
[Postal Code]

Dear [First Name]

Red Deer College Transfer Student Follow-Up Survey

Several months ago you participated in the first phase of this reasearch by completing a survey, the results of which will help the College to determine the interest in third and fourth year courses being offered in Red Deer; to discover ways in which the College might facilitate the transfer of students to universities; and to gain a student perspective on College experience.

The final phase of this research involves determining transfer students' current registration status; their transfer experiences if continuing in study; or their reasons for discontinuing if not currently registered in a post-secondary institution. Your response to this phase is absolutely critical to the success and usefulness of this research project. Your reply will be treated with the strictest confidentiality.

I would very much appreciate your completing the enclosed survey, and mailing it (despite the pending postal strike) in the self-addressed envelope enclosed by October 15 (or as soon as possible thereafter). No stamp is required on this envelope.

Please accept my sincere thanks for participating in this important project. The outcome of this research will benefit not only the College, but also College students of the future.

Sincerely,

Diane Tyler
Dean, Student Services

RED DEER COLLEGE

rdc

Box 5005
Red Deer, Alberta T4N 5H5
Telephone (403) 342-3300

October 30, 1987

[Name]
[Address]
[Town, Province]
[Postal Code]

Dear [First Name]:

Last Spring you were kind enough to participate in a research project I am conducting as a project approved by the College administration, the Faculty Association, and the Student Council president. The project involved tracking College transfer program students, to determine their experiences and the difficulties (if any) resulting from the transfer to university.

I sent you the enclosed form, and an explanatory letter last month--but unfortunately it was sent to your permanent address as listed with the College Registrar and with the postal strike I doubt has been forwarded to you. The Registrar's Office at the University has agreed to mail the survey to you. As you are one of the last few students I must track to complete the research, I sincerely hope that you will be willing to complete the enclosed form, and return it in the enclosed envelope. No stamp is needed.

I assure you that your comments will be treated in the strictest confidentiality and will be used only for statistical purposes connected with this research.

I hope you are enjoying your year on campus, and look forward to your reply.

Yours truly,

Diane Tyler,
Dean, Student Services
(On sabbatical)

TRANSFER STUDENT SURVEY

Please answer all of the following questions by writing in the answer, or checking the appropriate space, or circling as indicated.

Do not write in this space

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

1. What is your present age in years? ______

2. What is your gender?
Male____1
Female____2

3. What is your marital status (check one)
Single ____1
Married ____2
Other (please specify)____________________ ____3

4. How many hours a week do you estimate that you usually spend on each of the following activities?
Hours in class ____1
Hours studying and working on class assignments ____2
Hours out of class socializing or discussing studies with faculty or other College staff ____3
Hours in College-organized activities (e.g. student clubs, intramurals, athletics, etc.) ____4
Hours socializing with College friends ____5
Hours socializing with non-College friends ____6
Hours working in paid employment ____7
Hours in family-related activities ____8

5. Do you have any concern about your ability to finance your post-secondary education? (Check one)
None (I am confident that I will have sufficient funds) ____1
Some concern (but I will probably have enough funds) ____2
Major concern (not sure I will have enough funds to complete college) ____3

Do not write
in this space

6. Indicate the name of your present program of study

____

7. What is your current registration status at Red Deer College?

Full-time (60% of full program or more) _____

Part-time (less than 60% of full program) _____

8. Please indicate your cumulative grade point average at Red Deer College. (If you are unsure, give your closest estimate.) G.P.A. _____

9. How do you rate your academic performance? (Check one)

Better than I expected _____

About what I expected _____

Not up to my expectations _____

Do not write in this space

Academic Environmental Factors

10. Please read the following statements and give your feelings as to 1) how you rate Red Deer College on each factor, 2) the importance to you of each factor.

	R.D.C.				IMPORTANCE			
	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 High	4 Very High	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 High	4 Very High
A. **Peers**								
1. Students are friendly	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
2. Students vary widely in their academic abilities and interests	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
3. Students are enthusiastic	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
4. Students work hard	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
5. Students respect others	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
6. Students view the institution positively	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
7. Students help each other in their course work	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
8. Students have high standards of achievement	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

Comments:

B. Instruction	R.D.C. 1 Very Low	R.D.C. 2 Low	R.D.C. 3 High	R.D.C. 4 Very High	IMPORTANCE 1 Very Low	IMPORTANCE 2 Low	IMPORTANCE 3 High	IMPORTANCE 4 Very High	Do not write in this space
1. Instructors are knowledgeable in subject area	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
2. Instructors possess the skills and techniques of teaching	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
3. Class sizes are appropriate	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
4. Reading assignments are valuable	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
5. Instructors are available to help students with problems	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
6. Courses are well organized	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
7. Course content is relevant	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
8. Course content is up-to-date	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
9. Assignments are graded fairly	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
10. Instructors' academic expectations are high	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
11. Course content is at an appropriate level of difficulty	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
12. Instructors are genuinely interested in students	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
13. Class discussions are valuable	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
14. Courses are intellectually stimulating	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
15. Instructors encourage initiative	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
16. Instructors are accessible and available after class for assistance or socializing	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	

Comments:

		R.D.C.				IMPORTANCE				Do not write in this space
		1 Very Low	2 Low	3 High	4 Very High	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 High	4 Very High	
C.	**Physical Factors**									
1.	Class scheduling is convenient	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
2.	Classrooms and laboratories are satisfactory	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
3.	The physical environment is comfortable	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
4.	Extra curricular facilities are satisfactory	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
5.	Study space is satisfactory	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
6.	Lounge space is satisfactory	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
7.	Facilities for athletics and intramurals are satisfactory	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
8.	Parking facilities are satisfactory	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
	Comments:									
D.	**Support Services**									
1.	Library services are satisfactory	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
2.	Orientation to the institution's policies and procedures is satisfactory	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
3.	Extra curricular activities are satisfactory	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
4.	Support staff are helpful	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
5.	Financial assistance is satisfactory	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	

	R.D.C.				IMPORTANCE				Do not write in this space
	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 High	4 Very High	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 High	4 Very High	
D. **Support Services** (Cont'd)									
6. Counselling services are satisfactory	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
7. Channels for student concerns are satisfactory	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
8. Food services are satisfactory	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
9. Student government is satisfactory	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
10. Child care facilities are satisfactory	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	
11. Learning Assistance services are satisfactory	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	

Comments:

Do not write
in this space

11. Do you plan on continuing your studies next Fall?

Yes_____
No_____

If "yes," where do you plan on registering?

Red Deer College_____
Alberta university_____
An other college_____
University of Alberta_____
University of Calgary_____
Lethbridge University_____
Athabasca University_____
An other University_____

If "no" why not? (Please check not more than three of the following)

Already met my goals in attending _____1
No longer interested in my program _____2
Insufficient funds for another term of study _____3
Obtained a job _____4
Too many other demands on my time (e.g. family, work responsibilities, etc.) _____5
Academic demands too high _____6
Do not like college life _____7
Courses not available in Red Deer and cannot/will not leave this area _____8
Other (Please specify)_____________________________9

12. In what year do you expect to complete you first degree? ________

Please write a few words in answer to the following questions.

13. a) What are some advantages to beginning postsecondary studies at this College?

b) Are there disadvantages to this?

Do not write
in this space

14. a) What are some advantages to beginning postsecondary studies at a university?

b) Are there disadvantages to this?

15. If a degree program were available at Red Deer College, what is your preference? (Check one)

Prefer to transfer 1______

Prefer to remain at Red Deer College 2______

16. If you are intending to continue studies at a university by next Fall, what do you expect will be the most difficult adjustments for you to make? (Leave blank if you are not intending to transfer to university by next Fall.)

	DIFFICULTY			
	1-Very Low	2-Low	3-High	4-Very High
a) getting to know my way around campus	( )	( )	( )	( )
b) making new friends	( )	( )	( )	( )
c) getting to know faculty	( )	( )	( )	( )
d) obtaining recognition	( )	( )	( )	( )
e) accessing services (e.g. obtaining special help)	( )	( )	( )	( )
f) coping with academic requirements	( )	( )	( )	( )
g) choosing appropriate courses	( )	( )	( )	( )
h) assuming more responsibility for my program	( )	( )	( )	( )
i) joining extracurricular activities	( )	( )	( )	( )
j) securing appropriate accommodation	( )	( )	( )	( )
k) getting to know my way around the city	( )	( )	( )	( )
l) coping financially with increased costs	( )	( )	( )	( )
m) coping with the distractions of city life	( )	( )	( )	( )

Other. (Please specify)________________________________

Do not write
in this space

17. In the next three years, what is your best guess as to the chances you will: (Check one for each item)

	No Chance 1	Very Little Chance 2	Some Chance 3	Very Good Chance 4
Change your program or major?	( )	( )	( )	( )
Change your career goal?	( )	( )	( )	( )
Fail one or more credit courses?	( )	( )	( )	( )
Achieve an 8 - 9 grade point average in any year?	( )	( )	( )	( )
Be elected to a student office?	( )	( )	( )	( )
Get a job to help pay your educational expenses?	( )	( )	( )	( )
Join a college or university athletic team?	( )	( )	( )	( )
Play intramural college or university sports?	( )	( )	( )	( )
Seek vocational or academic counselling?	( )	( )	( )	( )
Temporarily discontinue your College or University program?	( )	( )	( )	( )
Drop out permanently?	( )	( )	( )	( )
Be satisfied with university?	( )	( )	( )	( )
Get a bachelor's degree?	( )	( )	( )	( )

PART C: STUDENT GOALS

Do not write
in this space

18. Please indicate the importance of each of the following goals to you in your present program.

IMPORTANCE

	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 High	4 Very High
1. To clarify and develop means of achieving personal goals	( )	( )	( )	( )
2. To decide on a vocational career	( )	( )	( )	( )
3. To receive training in new job skills	( )	( )	( )	( )
4. To develop habits of life-long learning	( )	( )	( )	( )
5. To receive training for a specific occupational career. e.g., business, performing arts, nursing	( )	( )	( )	( )
6. To develop the social and emotional aspects of my personality	( )	( )	( )	( )
7. To become open, honest and trusting in relationships with others	( )	( )	( )	( )
8. To achieve high standards of intellectual performance	( )	( )	( )	( )
9. To acquire a basic general education in broad fields of knowledge	( )	( )	( )	( )
10. To develop a deeper level of self-understanding and self-worth	( )	( )	( )	( )
11. To prepare for advanced study at a college or university	( )	( )	( )	( )
12. To achieve high grades in courses	( )	( )	( )	( )
13. To develop a capacity to influence events affecting my life	( )	( )	( )	( )
14. To develop skills and habits in critical and constructive thinking	( )	( )	( )	( )
15. To receive preparation for training in a profession e.g. education, law, medicine	( )	( )	( )	( )

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in this space

IMPORTANCE

	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 High	4 Very High
16. To develop the ability to synthesize knowledge from a variety of sources	( )	( )	( )	( )
17. To develop the ability to undertake self-directed learning	( )	( )	( )	( )
18. To update existing employment skills	( )	( )	( )	( )
19. To develop skills and habits of study	( )	( )	( )	( )
20. To grow in terms of expanding personal interests, talents and ideas	( )	( )	( )	( )
21. To acquire some depth of knowledge in at least one field of interest	( )	( )	( )	( )
22. To receive training in a new or emerging career field	( )	( )	( )	( )

23. Other goals (Please specify)

Thank you very much for your help. The information you have contributed to this study will be carefully considered and your response will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Diane Tyler
Dean, Student Services
Red Deer College

March 1987

RED DEER COLLEGE TRANSFER STUDENT FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE.

_ _ _ _
1 2 3 3/4

Please answer all of the following questions by writing in the answer, or checking the appropriate space.

1. Are you currently registered at a post-secondary institution?

Yes _____ 1
No_____ 2

5

If "yes", please complete Part 1. If "no", please move on to Part 2 on page 3.

PART I: to be answered by those currently attending a post-secondary institution.

1. At which institution are you currently registered?

Red Deer College _____1
University of Alberta _____2
University of Calgary _____3
Lethbridge University _____4
Athabasca University _____5
Other: *please specify* _____6
____

6

2. If you transferred from Red Deer College to another post- secondary institution, please check all of the items below, indicating the level of difficulty experienced.

		DIFFICULTY			
	Very Low 1	Low 2	High 3	Very High 4	
(a) Getting to know my way around campus.	( )	( )	( )	( )	7
(b) Making new friends.	( )	( )	( )	( )	8
(c) Getting to know faculty.	( )	( )	( )	( )	9
(d) Obtaining recognition.	( )	( )	( )	( )	10
(e) Accessing services (e.g. obtaining special help)	( )	( )	( )	( )	11
(f) Coping with academic requirements.	( )	( )	( )	( )	12
(g) Choosing appropriate courses.	( )	( )	( )	( )	13
(h) Assuming more responsibility for my program.	( )	( )	( )	( )	14
(i) Participating in extra-curricular activities.	( )	( )	( )	( )	15
(j) Finding appropriate accommodation.	( )	( )	( )	( )	16
(k) Getting to know my way around the city.	( )	( )	( )	( )	17

		DIFFICULTY				DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE
		Very Low 1	Low 2	High 3	Very High 4	
(l)	Coping financially with increased costs.	( )	( )	( )	( )	18
(m)	Coping with the distractions of city life.	( )	( )	( )	( )	19
(n)	Other difficulties. *(please specify)* ______________________					20

____

3. Did you have any difficulty obtaining credit for transfer courses completed at Red Deer College?

Yes ______ 1 **21**
No ______ 2

If you experienced any difficulties in obtaining transfer credits, please specify.

____

____

4. Any other comments about your transfer experiences? ______________________

____

5. Have you withdrawn from your studies since transferring?

Yes ______ 1 **22**
No ______ 2

If "yes", why? ______________________________________

Thank you for your participation in this survey. The information you have contributed to this research will be very helpful, and your response will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

September, 1987

Diane Tyler,
Dean, Student Services,
Red Deer College

PART 2: to be answered by those NOT currently attending a post-secondary institution.

1. If you are NOT currently registered at a post-secondary institution, please read the the following statements and indicate how important to you the following reasons were for your not continuing your program at the present time.

		IMPORTANCE				DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE.
		Very Low 1	Low 2	High 3	Very High 4	
(a)	Obtained a desirable job.	( )	( )	( )	( )	23
(b)	Lack financial support to continue.	( )	( )	( )	( )	24
(c)	Grades too low.	( )	( )	( )	( )	25
(d)	Change of career goals.	( )	( )	( )	( )	26
(e)	Uncertain about career goals.	( )	( )	( )	( )	27
(f)	Question value of obtaining a degree.	( )	( )	( )	( )	28
(g)	Not accepted to the program of my choice by the university.	( )	( )	( )	( )	29
(h)	Unable to relocate.	( )	( )	( )	( )	30
(i)	Poor health.	( )	( )	( )	( )	31
(j)	Encouraged to discontinue by someone of importance to me.	( )	( )	( )	( )	32
(k)	Have met my present educational goals.	( )	( )	( )	( )	33
(l)	Need for a break in my studies.	( )	( )	( )	( )	34
(m)	Any other reasons? ________________					35

2. Have your studies at the College been of value to you?

Yes ______ 1
No ______ 2

36

Continued on next page.

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE.

3. Do you plan to continue in post-secondary studies within the next three years?

Yes ______ 1
No ______ 2

37

Thank you for your participation in this survey. The information you have contributed to this study will be very helpful, and your response will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

September, 1987

Diane Tyler,
Dean, Student Services,
Red Deer College

APPENDIX B

Summary of Responses for the Total Population

March Questionnaire

October Questionnaire

For both the March questionnaire and the October questionnaire, responses to open-ended questions follow the numerical tabulations.

Table B-1

TRANSFER STUDENT SURVEY

Responses to the first questionnaire mailed in March.
Responses received: 160.
Discrepancies in percentage totals are due to rounding.

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

		Valid Per cent	Mean	Mode
1. Present age in years:	18 - 21 years	62.3%	23.0	19.0
	22 - 49 years	37.7		
2. Gender:	Male	47.5%		
	Female	52.5%		
3. Marital Status:	Single	78.7%		
	Married	13.2%		
	Other	8.1%		
4. Estimated hours per week spent on activities:				
Hours in class			18.2	15.0
Hours studying and working on class assignments			19.2	20.0
Hours out of class discussing studies or socializing with faculty or other College staff			3.4	1.0
Hours in College-organized activities (e.g. student clubs, intramurals, athletics, pubs, etc.)			3.7	.0
Hours socializing with College friends			9.6	10.0
Hours socializing with non-College friends			6.1	2.0
Hours working in paid employment			4.5	.0
Hours in family-related activities			8.5	.0
5. Concerns about ability to finance post-secondary education. (Check one).				
None (I am confident that I will have funds)		14.4%		
Some concern (but I will probably have enough funds)		55.6%		
Major concern (not sure I will have enough funds to complete post-secondary				

studies)	30.0%

6. Programs in which enrolled. (Check one).

Bachelor of Arts	18.2%
Bachelor of Arts in Recreation Administration	9.5%
Bachelor of Commerce	15.1%
Bachelor of Education	28.9%
Bachelor of Fine Arts	6.3%
Bachelor of Science	7.5%
Pre-Professional Program	14.5%

7. Current registration status at the College:

Full-time (60% of full program or more)	92.5%
Part-time (less than 60% of full program)	7.5%

		Mean	Mode
8. Cumulative grade point average at Red Deer College. (Estimate if unsure.)		6.6	6.0
8.0 to 8.7	12.1%		
7.0 to 7.9	32.3%		
6.0 to 6.9	43.6%		
5.0 to 5.9	8.9%		
4.0 to 4.9	1.2%		
3.0	1.3%		
2.0	.6%		

9. Student rating of academic performance.

Better than I expected	17.5%
About what I expected	40.6%
Not up to my expectations	41.9%

Academic Environmental Factors

10. Indicates how students rate Red Deer College on each factor and the importance to students of each factor.

A. Peers

1. Students are friendly.

RDC:	Very low/low	9.5	Importance:	Very low/low	10.7
	High/very high	90.5		High/very high	89.3
	Mean	3.0		Mean	3.2

	Mode	3.0		Mode	3.0

2. Students vary widely in their academic abilities and interests.

RDC:	Very low/low	10.1	Importance:	Very low/low	40.9
	High/very high	89.9		High/very high	59.1
	Mean	3.0		Mean	2.6
	Mode	3.0		Mode	3.0

3. Students are enthusiastic about their studies.

RDC:	Very low/low	39.0	Importance:	Very low/low	17.0
	High/very high	61.0		High/very high	83.0
	Mean	2.6		Mean	3.0
	Mode	3.0		Mode	3.0

4. Students work hard.

RDC:	Very low/low	29.7	Importance:	Very low/low	13.3
	High/very high	70.3		High/very high	86.7
	Mean	2.7		Mean	3.1
	Mode	3.0		Mode	3.0

5. Students respect others.

RDC:	Very low/low	22.0	Importance:	Very low/low	5.0
	High/very high	78.0		High/very high	95.0
	Mean	2.9		Mean	3.3
	Mode	3.0		Mode	3.0

6. Students view the institution positively.

RDC:	Very low/low	18.4	Importance:	Very low/low	10.1
	High/very high	81.6		High/very high	89.9
	Mean	3.0		Mean	3.2
	Mode	3.0		Mode	3.0

7. Students help each other in their course work.

RDC:	Very low/low	27.7	Importance:	Very low/low	17.1
	High/very high	72.3		High/very high	82.9
	Mean	2.8		Mean	3.1
	Mode	3.0		Mode	3.0

8. Students have high standards of achievement.

RDC:	Very low/low	30.8	Importance:	Very low/low	6.9
	High/very high	69.2		High/very high	93.1
	Mean	2.7		Mean	3.2
	Mode	3.0		Mode	3.0

B. General Quality of Instruction

1. Instructors are knowledgeable in subject area.

RDC:	Very low/low	3.1	Importance:	Very low/low	----
	High/very high	96.9		High/very high	100.0
	Mean	3.2		Mean	3.8
	Mode	3.0		Mode	4.0

2. Instructors possess the skills and techniques of teaching.

RDC:	Very low/low	13.2	Importance:	Very low/low	----

	High/very high	86.8		High/very high	100.0
	Mean	3.0		Mean	3.7
	Mode	3.0		Mode	4.0

3. Class sizes are appropriate.

RDC:	Very low/low	6.3	Importance:	Very low/low	7.5
	High/very high	93.7		High/very high	92.5
	Mean	3.2		Mean	3.3
	Mode	3.0		Mode	3.0

4. Reading assignments are valuable.

RDC:	Very low/low	32.5	Importance:	Very low/low	23.6
	High/very high	67.5		High/very high	76.4
	Mean	2.7		Mean	2.9
	Mode	3.0		Mode	3.0

5. Instructors are available to help students with problems.

RDC:	Very low/low	8.8	Importance:	Very low/low	5.7
	High/very high	91.2		High/very high	94.3
	Mean	3.3		Mean	3.5
	Mode	3.0		Mode	4.0

6. Courses are well organized.

RDC:	Very low/low	7.1	Importance:	Very low/low	1.3
	High/very high	92.9		High/very high	98.7
	Mean	3.1		Mean	3.5
	Mode	3.0		Mode	3.0

7. Course content is relevant.

RDC:	Very low/low	10.7	Importance:	Very low/low	3.8
	High/very high	89.3		High/very high	96.2
	Mean	3.1		Mean	3.4
	Mode	3.0		Mode	4.0

8. Course content is up-to-date.

RDC:	Very low/low	8.9	Importance:	Very low/low	2.5
	High/very high	91.1		High/very high	97.5
	Mean	3.1		Mean	3.4
	Mode	3.0		Mode	3.0

9. Assignments are graded fairly.

RDC:	Very low/low	20.9	Importance:	Very low/low	.6
	High/very high	79.1		High/very high	99.4
	Mean	2.9		Mean	3.6
	Mode	3.0		Mode	4.0

10. Instructors' academic expectations are high.

RDC:	Very low/low	8.9	Importance:	Very low/low	7.0
	High/very high	91.1		High/very high	93.0
	Mean	3.1		Mean	3.2
	Mode	3.0		Mode	3.0

11. Course content is at an appropriate level of difficulty.

RDC:	Very low/low	7.6	Importance:	Very low/low	3.2

	RDC	Importance
High/very high	92.4	96.8
Mean	3.0	3.2
Mode	3.0	3.0

12. Instructors are genuinely interested in students.

	RDC:	Importance:
Very low/low	17.0	3.1
High/very high	83.0	96.9
Mean	3.0	3.5
Mode	3.0	4.0

13. Class discussions are valuable.

	RDC:	Importance:
Very low/low	20.1	9.4
High/very high	79.9	90.6
Mean	3.0	3.3
Mode	3.0	3.0

14. Courses are intellectually stimulating.

	RDC:	Importance:
Very low/low	15.1	3.8
High/very high	84.9	96.2
Mean	3.0	3.5
Mode	3.0	4.0

15. Instructors encourage initiative.

	RDC:	Importance:
Very low/low	19.5	6.3
High/very high	80.5	93.7
Mean	3.0	3.3
Mode	3.0	3.0

C. Physical Factors

1. Class scheduling is convenient.

	RDC:	Importance:
Very low/low	24.7	7.6
High/very high	75.3	92.4
Mean	2.8	3.3
Mode	3.0	3.0

2. Classrooms and laboratories are satisfactory.

	RDC:	Importance:
Very low/low	10.8	8.9
High/very high	89.2	91.1
Mean	3.0	3.2
Mode	3.0	3.0

3. The physical environment is comfortable.

	RDC:	Importance:
Very low/low	12.7	7.6
High/very high	87.3	92.4
Mean	3.0	3.2
Mode	3.0	3.0

4. Extra-curricular facilities are satisfactory.

	RDC:	Importance:
Very low/low	12.4	25.8
High/very high	87.6	74.2
Mean	3.1	2.9
Mode	3.0	3.0

5. Study space is satisfactory.

RDC:		Importance:	
Very low/low	44.3	Very low/low	12.0
High/very high	55.7	High/very high	88.0
Mean	2.6	Mean	3.3
Mode	3.0	Mode	3.0

6. Lounge space around the College is satisfactory.

RDC:		Importance:	
Very low/low	34.4	Very low/low	26.1
High/very high	65.6	High/very high	73.9
Mean	2.8	Mean	3.0
Mode	3.0	Mode	3.0

7. Facilities for athletics and intramurals are satisfactory.

RDC:		Importance:	
Very low/low	9.7	Very low/low	37.2
High/very high	90.3	High/very high	62.8
Mean	3.1	Mean	2.7
Mode	3.0	Mode	3.0

8. Parking facilities are satisfactory.

RDC:		Importance:	
Very low/low	53.2	Very low/low	17.0
High/very high	46.8	High/very high	83.0
Mean	2.3	Mean	3.1
Mode	3.0	Mode	3.0

D. Support Services

1. Library services are satisfactory.

RDC:		Importance:	
Very low/low	17.1	Very low/low	1.3
High/very high	82.9	High/very high	98.7
Mean	3.0	Mean	3.5
Mode	3.0	Mode	4.0

2. Orientation to the institution's policies and procedures is satisfactory.

RDC:		Importance:	
Very low/low	35.4	Very low/low	19.6
High/very high	64.6	High/very high	80.4
Mean	2.7	Mean	3.0
Mode	3.0	Mode	3.0

3. Extra-curricular activities are satisfactory.

RDC:		Importance:	
Very low/low	13.5	Very low/low	34.6
High/very high	86.5	High/very high	65.4
Mean	3.0	Mean	2.8
Mode	3.0	Mode	3.0

4. Support staff are helpful.

RDC:		Importance:	
Very low/low	15.4	Very low/low	15.4
High/very high	84.6	High/very high	84.6
Mean	2.9	Mean	3.1
Mode	3.0	Mode	3.0

5. Financial assistance is satisfactory.

RDC:		Importance:	
Very low/low	30.8	Very low/low	18.2
High/very high	69.2	High/very high	81.8
Mean	2.6	Mean	3.1

	Mode	3.0		Mode	3.0

6. Counselling services are satisfactory.

RDC:	Very low/low	31.6	Importance:	Very low/low	21.2
	High/very high	68.4		High/very high	78.8
	Mean	2.7		Mean	3.1
	Mode	3.0		Mode	3.0

7. Channels for student concerns are satisfactory.

RDC:	Very low/low	41.1	Importance:	Very low/low	18.5
	High/very high	58.9		High/very high	81.5
	Mean	2.6		Mean	3.0
	Mode	3.0		Mode	3.0

8. Instructors socialize with students outside class hours.

RDC:	Very low/low	42.9	Importance:	Very low/low	51.3
	High/very high	57.1		High/very high	48.7
	Mean	2.6		Mean	2.5
	Mode	3.0		Mode	2.0

9. Food services are satisfactory.

RDC:	Very low/low	18.5	Importance:	Very low/low	22.9
	High/very high	81.5		High/very high	77.1
	Mean	2.9		Mean	2.9
	Mode	3.0		Mode	3.0

10. Student government is satisfactory.

RDC:	Very low/low	28.1	Importance:	Very low/low	28.1
	High/very high	71.9		High/very high	71.9
	Mean	2.7		Mean	2.9
	Mode	3.0		Mode	3.0

11. Child care facilities are satisfactory.

RDC:	Very low/low	12.2	Importance:	Very low/low	58.9
	High/very high	87.8		High/very high	41.1
	Mean	2.9		Mean	2.2
	Mode	3.0		Mode	1.0

12. Learning Assistance services are satisfactory.

RDC:	Very low/low	9.3	Importance:	Very low/low	28.9
	High/very high	90.7		High/very high	71.1
	Mean	3.0		Mean	2.8
	Mode	3.0		Mode	3.0

13. Residences are satisfactory.

RDC:	Very low/low	26.8	Importance:	Very low/low	43.4
	High/very high	73.2		High/very high	56.6
	Mean	2.8		Mean	2.5
	Mode	3.0		Mode	1.0

11. Do you plan on continuing your studies next Fall?

Yes: 91.9
No: 2.5
Undecided: 5.6

If "yes", where do you plan on registering? (Please check only one.)

University of Alberta: 47.0
Red Deer College: 24.5
University of Calgary: 20.7
Another University: 5.4
Another college: 2.0
Lethbridge University: .7
Athabasca University: 0.0

If "no", why not? (Please check not more than three of the following).

	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3
Already met my goals in attending	11.1%		
No longer interested in my program	22.2%		
Insufficient funds for another term of study	33.3%	20.0%	
Obtained a job	---	20.0%	
Too many other demands on my time (e.g. family, work responsibilities, etc.)	11.1%	20.0%	100%
Academic demands too high	11.1%		
Do not like college life	---		
Courses not available in Red Deer and cannot/ will not leave this area	11.1%		
Other	---	40.0%	

(Note: Rank 1 based on 10 responses; Rank 2 on 5 responses and Rank 3 on 2 responses.)

12. In what year do you expect to complete your first degree?

1987 to 1989: 65.3%
1990 to 1999: 34.7%

15. If a degree program were available at Red Deer College, what would be your preferance? (Check one.)

Prefer to transfer:	19.9%
Prefer to remain at Red Deer College:	80.1%

16. If you were to continue studies at a university in the near future, what would you expect to be the difficult adjustments? (Please answer each question.) Very Low to Very High responses shown as percentages.

	DIFFICULTY					
	Very Low	Low	High	Very High	Mean	Mode
a) Getting to know my way around campus	8.7	40.0	36.9	14.4	2.6	2.0
b) Making new friends	10.0	46.3	32.5	11.2	2.5	2.0
c) Getting to know faculty	2.5	23.9	47.8	25.8	3.0	3.0
d) Obtaining recognition	3.1	30.6	41.9	24.4	2.9	3.0
e) Accessing services (e.g. obtaining special help)	3.1	32.7	50.3	13.8	2.7	3.0
f) Coping with academic requirements	7.5	40.0	39.4	13.1	2.6	2.0
g) Choosing appropriate courses	5.6	40.6	40.6	13.1	2.6	2.0
h) Assuming more responsibility for my program	9.4	50.0	33.7	6.9	2.4	2.0
i) Joining extracurricular activities	15.8	57.6	20.3	6.3	2.2	2.0
j) Securing appropriate accommodation	10.0	28.7	42.5	18.8	2.7	3.0
k) Getting to know my way around the city	15.0	41.9	23.7	19.4	2.5	2.0
l) Coping financially with increased costs	2.5	25.6	38.7	33.1	3.0	3.0
m) Coping with the distractions of city life	18.8	48.7	25.0	7.5	2.2	2.0

17. In the next three years, what is your best guess as to the chances you will: (Check one for each item.)

	No Chance	Very Little Chance	Some Chance	Very Good Chance	Mean	Mode
Change your program or major?	27.0	42.1	20.1	10.7	2.1	2.0

Change your career goal?	20.6	37.5	33.7	8.1	2.3	2.0
Fail one or more credit courses?	21.2	46.2	29.4	3.1	2.1	2.0
Achieve an 8 - 9 grade point average in any year?	10.6	39.4	38.1	11.9	2.5	2.0
Be elected to a student office?	48.1	34.8	13.9	3.2	1.7	1.0
Get a job to help pay your educational expenses?	6.3	20.8	41.5	31.4	3.0	3.0
Join a college or university athletic team?	41.1	26.6	22.8	9.5	2.0	1.0
Play intramural college or university sports?	25.9	26.0	26.6	21.5	2.4	3.0
Seek vocational or academic counselling?	2.5	31.6	49.4	16.5	2.8	3.0
Temporarily discontinue your College or University program?	26.2	36.2	25.6	11.9	2.2	2.0
Drop out permanently?	71.1	23.3	5.0	.6	1.4	1.0
Be satisfied with university?	.6	5.7	37.1	56.6	3.5	4.0
Get a bachelor's degree?	.6	2.5	20.0	76.9	3.7	4.0

PART C: STUDENT GOALS

18. Please indicate the importance of each of the following goals to you in your present program.

	IMPORTANCE					
	Very Low	Low	High	Very High	Mean	Mode
1. To clarify and develop means of achieving personal goals	1.9	5.6	58.7	33.7	3.2	3.0
2. To decide on a vocational career	12.6	24.5	39.6	23.3	2.7	3.0
3. To receive training in new job skills	4.4	20.0	56.9	18.8	2.9	3.0
4. To develop habits of life-long learning	1.9	10.7	58.5	28.9	3.1	3.0
5. To receive training for a specific occupational career (e.g. business,						

performing arts, nursing)	4.4	24.4	45.0	26.2	2.9	3.0
6. To develop the social and emotional aspects of my personality	3.1	17.5	54.4	25.0	3.0	3.0
7. To become open, honest and trusting in relationships with others	3.1	15.6	59.4	21.9	3.0	3.0
8. To achieve high standards of intellectual performance	0.0	3.8	54.7	41.5	3.4	3.0
9. To acquire a basic general education in broad fields of knowledge	1.9	16.9	56.3	25.0	3.0	3.0
10. To develop a deeper level of self-understanding and self-worth	1.9	12.5	56.3	29.4	3.1	3.0
11. To prepare for advanced study at a college or university	.6	13.1	51.9	34.4	3.2	3.0
12. To achieve high grades in courses	1.9	10.0	58.1	30.0	3.2	3.0
13. To develop a capacity to influence events affecting my life	.6	7.5	58.1	33.7	3.3	3.0
14. To develop skills and habits in critical & constructive thinking	0.0	4.4	62.5	33.1	3.3	3.0
15. To receive preparation for training in a profession (e.g. education, law, medicine)	2.5	15.0	38.7	43.8	3.2	4.0
16. To develop the ability to synthesize knowledge from a variety of sources	0.0	6.9	64.2	28.9	3.2	3.0
17. To develop the ability to undertake self-directed learning	.6	5.0	59.4	35.0	3.3	3.0
18. To update existing employment skills	8.8	26.4	47.8	17.0	2.7	3.0
19. To develop skills and habits of study	.6	7.5	62.5	29.4	3.2	3.0
20. To grow in terms of expanding personal interest, talents and ideas	1.2	4.4	53.1	41.3	3.3	3.0
21. To acquire some depth of knowledge in at least one field of interest	2.9	1.9	53.1	45.0	3.4	3.0
22. To receive training in a new or emerging career field	5.7	31.4	50.3	12.6	2.7	3.0

Question 10A

Write in comments regarding student peers

9 positive comments

"All numbers except 5 pertain to those students that I have associated with. #5 [given a "low" under RDC] reflects the way students look after the school or other people's property, etc."
"It is different in different programs but most in P.E. get along well."
"Second year students and older ones seem to be more interested in getting a good education and therefore working harder to promote a atmosphere encouraging this point."
"I feel people in my faculty (Rec.) help each other more."
"RDC is excellent and the students are good."
"I think the people (including instructors) are terrific and this is very important to me as it keeps up positive attitudes."
"I find the people very friendly and willing to help others--RDC has a very warm, secure atmosphere."
"I believe there are two different classes of students attending RDC. 50%/50% split. On the one hand there are students who have definite goals and are striving to excel academically. On the other hand there are students who are looking to get married, get lucky, have a party or any number of other things. What makes RDC such a unique and first rate institution is the fact that either goal can be achieved. A community college is a community college is a community college. In the final analysis it is the individual who decides on his/her choice of peer group. Much education takes place outside of the classrooms."
"The attitudes of my peers have enhanced my educational experience at RDC."

5 negative comments:

"Not enough serious students to be found, instead there are too many distracters. This is evident in the library by viewing how much work is being done and observing the noise level."
"Apathy is high at RDC--students are too concerned with academics."
"A lot of students don't understand the reason they're here. Education is secondary."
"Procrastination is rampant!"
"I feel some students are wasting their time and the instructor time for they are very disruptive to whose who are trying to get the most out of a course."

6 respondents expressed difficulties in making judgements or their responses could not be categorized by the above categories:

"It's hard to generalize about the students because I mainly am in contact with only Rec. students."
"Difficult to generalize as all students are different."

"#8 - re:low. It may not be fair to judge others' standards by my own (i.e., I always work towards a 9)."
"These factors all vary (i.e., age of student; how many years at the college; how motivated the student is)."
"What others do is up to them--I march to my own drummer." (Respondent gave low scores throughout this question.)
"You should put a medium score in this; too black and white."
"Some students are here to work hard and progress while others are very apathetic towards the College and their studies. I find the College the perfect size for those who are not ready to make the transition from high school directly to university."

Question 10B

Write in comments: General quality and importance of instruction

9 positive comments:

"The instructors are excellent and go out of their way to help."
"I believe the quality of instruction at RDC is such that a 8 - 9 student will remain a 8 - 9 student regardless of his/her choice of future institutions. For marginal students who have exploited the better nature of their instructors and have taken advantage of their increased accessibility the transition to a more impersonal university setting could be academically devastating. I think instructors should spend more time choosing or upgrading textbooks."
"With some exceptions I have found instructors to be very well equipped and prepared for their responsibilities."
"Generally excellent instruction."
"In most cases I feel confident to approach my instructors."
"Instructors that appear to be very knowledgeable also appear interested in student's learning. Need more instructors like Torben Andersen."
"I have never had an instructor here that I did not really like and respect."
"In my program the instructors and students are able to get to know each other better. I am unsure about the other faculties."
"The instructors within my faculty are very knowlegable and show concern about students' performance. The atmosphere is very friendly and I find it more comfortable than high school even. However, with this comfortable setting it is easy for students to become lazy or take advantage. More emphasis should be placed on self-responsibility and preparation for university."
"I have been impressed with the degree of interest exhibited by most instructors in regards to their students. Most of the instructors that I personally have been involved with are to be commended."

10 comments were predominantly negative:

"#9! Assignments in some classes are not!!"

"I find most instructors know their material well but don't allow enough time for students to voice their opinions and thoughts, or rather they don't encourage it. I think class interaction and discussion should be given greater emphasis. Quality of instruction is good though."

"Identical answers do not always receive identical marks (only one teacher in my experience.)"

"Rec. instructors are, but not others in the general courses I find." [Refers to Question B 12.]

"#1, #2, #12: I noted these on the average, but have experienced specific incidents where I would rate all three VERY LOW."

"I find that individual learning (not memorization) is not emphasized. Students are not encouraged to develop their own ideas and opinions, instead they are required to memorize someone else."

"Some students I have talked to feel that some profs do not possess the skills and techniques of teaching but they have dynamic personalities."

"The workload is way too heavy."

"Most instructors are knowledgeable but not good teachers."

"Re #10: Sometimes the instructors' expectations are too high and the students can't seem to satisfy them. This is not fair to the student or the instructor."

Several comments reflected respondents' difficulties in generalizing in order to respond to the question:

"There is a wide variety of instructors. Most are excellent, but there are some that don't possess the qualities outlined above by any stretch of the imagination."

"Generally all courses well taught except Chem. 350 and Stats. 241 (especially marked with stars)" [Refers to question 6, 7, and 9.]

"Instruction varies greatly with individual instructors."

"Sometimes by comparing the different courses I have, I think of different rates regarding Q.'s 1-15. However I have tried to answer on an average of the courses I have participated in."

"There is a great range between some courses in regards to the word "General"."

"I feel "instructors" is too general. My answer is not so positive for a few I have experienced. There should be another category between high and low."

"Some courses are stimulating, others are not, need a point between low and high."

"Quality of instructors varies from class to class. All these factors vary a lot in different classes so it is difficult to make general statements."

"Re 2: Some instructors possess skills and techniques of teaching. Re 12: Some instructors are genuinely interested in students, some seem to hate their jobs and shouldn't be there."

"Some teachers are good and well organized and some are not. Some are not fair in marking system."

"Re question 6 - sometimes but not always."

Question 10C

Write in comments: Quality and importance of RDC physical factors

Need for quiet study areas:

"Lounges should remain open 24 hours."
"Library hours needs to be extended dramatically (i.e., into late evening) both on weekdays and weekends. Compare them to a University and notice the difference...also the Library needs a computerized filing system."
"During exam periods, it is difficult to find a place to study."
"I think we need more quiet study lounges--even the LRC is too noisy!!"
"Too often study areas (e.g., the tech. wing) are being used for lounges."
"Space for truly quiet study is nonexistent. Same with space to practice a sport or dancing on your own."
"More study lounges are needed around the college--Quiet ones."
"Adequate study space but limited hours of access."
"...more quiet areas for studying."

College atmosphere:

"RDC has a good atmosphere (relaxed) and the schedules are fine."
"RDC is a beautiful institution and one to be proud of."
"RDC is well equipped."
"The environment is very comfortable and relaxing to be in."

Non-smoking areas:

"Need non-smoking study areas."
"Not enough (any) non-smoking areas to suffice."
"Smoking remains a problem. (Hallways lounges, cafeteria)."

Parking:

"Students should be allowed to park in NW (Arts Centre parking) even during day-time performances."
"Need more parking..."
"Parking lots should be larger at back and they (i.e., Lot L) should be PAVED. This is LONG overdue!"
"Parking gets better near the end of each semester."
"Parking is very overcrowded and expansion is definitely needed."

Scheduling:

"Some exam and class schedules are poorly arranged."
"Most 2nd and 3rd year courses only available at night."
"Some cases classes are hard to fit into a schedule appropriately."
"8:00 a.m. classes are inconvenient."

Other:

"Lighting is very, very, very, very poor in lounge areas and around those hallways display cases where tests, etc., are displayed!"
"There are only 2 racquetball courts, and no squash courts--it would be nice to see extra courts built."

Question 10D

Write in comments: Quality and importance of Support Services

Academic Advising:

"I found that I had to go to my department coordinator for any of my academic questions. I found student counselling highly unsatisfactory. I sensed a great deal of complacency."
"I have always had major problems with the RDC Counselling system, however, I did not feel my attempts to bring these problems to light were considered seriously. As I see it they are not up to date on transfer requirements, etc.....and tend to give a lot of bad advice to students concerning course selection regarding their programs. They also have a very poor scheduling system, when you need a counsellor you need a counsellor not in two weeks. RDC students should be the priority not 2nd rate to out of town prospective entrants....Please note: they are very highly skilled in personal counselling and should be congratulated for this sincerely."
"Counsellors leave one more confused when one needs them."
"One concern is the lack of "communication" between various departments as well as misinformation received regarding other institutions."

Student Government:

"The student government does not seem to do enough for the students. It just seems to run the bar which not all students go to. The student government needs to provide activities that are exciting and fun for the students (e.g., have plays and concerts for the students at low prices like $1.00 or so)."
"Greater orientation and awareness regarding student government and policies (and the institution's policies) should be provided and encouraged. Many students are uninformed in this area."
"Student government is a shambles."
"A tighter reign should be put on the Students Association. They seem to run events to cater to themselves, taking the first pick of any tickets for an event. (This is always the case). As well, the lounge should not be open on Sundays for drinking and partying as I believe it may have been in the past. Events should be organized to accommodate the non-drinking students more regularly."
"Student Association seems to be more of an elitist party group. Drugs are more important to them than affairs of students. (Past year anyway.)"

Child Care:

"The future increased costs planned for child care are outrageous."
"Child care facilities should cover a wider range (0-2 yr.)"
"Exceptional child care centre."
"Child care through RDC is too expensive, not available for scheduled evening classes."

Residences:

"Residences need improving."
"I rated the importance of the residences low because I've only visited there. I live off campus."
"Residences excellent but populated by noisy students with little interest in sleeping."
"I live at home; however, most of the residences wouldn't be comfortable for myself (i.e., the towers.)"
(Note: None of these respondents commenting lived in residence.)

Library:

"Library is usually noisy and cold. Most needed magazines are not carried by library (in Psychology)."
"The library is limited as to number of copies of books. This makes research difficult."

Cafeteria:

"Cafeteria prices are too high for the amount of food given, and not always that tasty."
"Would prefer less fried foods. More healthful and nourishing foods."
"Cafeteria hours should be extended to weekends for people living in residence. A convenience store on campus would be great for residence."

Other:

"Nobody really knows what is going on. You need clout to see any administrator of importance, to get something done."
"No mention was made of the semesters and college calendar's structure. I believe the planning for only four days between the end of classes in April and the commencement of final exams is ludicrous and detrimental to the students who work hard throughout the semester. Any time saved by this method is, in my opinion, of no benefit to students, faculty or the college. I believe this must be addressed!"
"Students should be made more aware of these services--that is, more advertising of available services."

Question 11

Comments explaining reasons for planning not to continue studies in the fall

"Will be moving to California"
"Children really don't want to leave Red Deer"
"Want a year off--to work (if a job is open) and to get work experience"
"Pressures got a bit high this last year"
"I am applying for second term admittance"
"Need to work for a while, take a break from studies."
"Want a break from studying--tired of learning from books"

Question 13(a)

Comments relating to advantages of beginning study in Red Deer College

Instruction/socialization related comments:

44 responses	Easier transition from high school
43 responses	Smaller class sizes, smaller classes make it more conducive to learning or to meeting people
43 responses	Right size College, right size community
37 responses	Less expensive, low cost
36 responses	Good faculty/student relationships, access to faculty, socialize with faculty outside of class, faculty take a personal interest in students
33 responses	More personal, a closeness or community spirit, more care shown for students
31 responses	Close to home
27 responses	Friendly, easy to meet people
16 responses	Good atmosphere at the College
13 responses	Better quality of instruction
6 responses	Location of College, or of city
4 responses	Good facilities
4 responses	Easy to get involved
2 responses	Less competition
2 responses	Easier registration process or easier to gain admittance
2 responses	College right size for those returning to learning after having been out of school for some time
1 response	Grading not on a bell curve

Question 13(b)

Comments relating to disadvantages to beginning study at Red Deer College

38 responses	Having to relocate later in midpoint of program, moving twice, adjusting to a new institution
35 responses	Courses may not transfer
17 responses	Course offerings at the College are limited
11 responses	Facilities not up-to-date or adequate (usually refers to library not having more copies of required readings, lack of research facilities)
6 responses	High standards, hard to get into
5 responses	Less pressure, less competition
5 responses	Miss advantages larger centre brings (e.g., variety, art galleries, new people)
3 responses	Some instructors poor
2 responses	Concern with stigma associated with being a transfer (as opposed to "native") student
2 responses	Advantage of being anonymous in a large university, no favoritism by faculty of one student over another

Single responses were received as follows: not enough interaction with third and fourth year students, being disillusioned after transfer, being away from home and adjusting to a new lifestyle, expensive, do not like the grading scheme, and too many "preps" look down on "cowboys/cowgirls."

Question 14(a)

Comments related to advantages of beginning study at a university

77 responses: do not have the adjustment/trauma of having to transfer during your program; possibility of losing some credits
22 responses: greater variety in courses/programs offered.
16 responses: develop coping skills needed for larger environment
9 responses: better equipment, facilities, library resources
9 responses: quality of instruction may be better
9 responses: more demanding, challenge of greater competition, higher standards
8 responses: advantages of larger campus (e.g., convenience services on campus, more older students, research facilities/capability, more variety in activities)
7 responses: keep friendships for four years
5 responses: possibility of acquiring more friendships
2 responses: location in larger city
1 response: less demanding

Question 14(b)

Comments related to disadvantages of beginning study at a university

40 responses: cold, impersonal environment in which the individual student is "just a number".
37 responses: higher costs of university.
34 responses: large class sizes.
30 responses: environment too large and confusing.
23 responses: lack of access to faculty, faculty contact or interaction with students, out-of-class contact with professors.
21 responses: overwhelming, intimidating, a shock.
17 responses: too great a shift/transition from high school to university (e.g. "You can die in the 1st year of studies!")
13 responses: no support network, unfriendly, hard to meet people.
10 responses: more pressure, stress, competition.
4 responses: faculty do not care about individual students.
3 responses: far from home.
3 responses: city too big.
2 responses: faculty focus on 3rd and 4th year students.
2 responses: no cohesiveness, no closeness.
2 responses: lower quality of education.
2 responses: living accommodations.

Question 16

Comments re anticipated difficulties in adjusting to university

"Being able to cope with the overall change."
"Extracurricular activities within University don't concern me as I have so much going on outside of University."
"Commuting to the larger center. Due to family and other obligations it would be impossible for me to reside there."
"It will be very difficult because I have a financial problem as a result of my student loan being so small."
"Knowing appropriate steps to be taken during transfer."
"My answers marked 'very low' (d, l, and m) can be interpreted as 'who cares?'."
"I have attended a university before and I know (sort of) what to expect."
"Adjustment to a much larger institution."
"Being away from a spouse."

Question 18

Additional goal statements added by respondents

(a) Career related goals:

"To obtain a career choice that will satisfy my goals of life time employment."
"To be good at my profession, help people, and like what I am doing."
"I view my first two years of study in Commerce as a stepping stone into corporate law. It is a mean rather than an end as it is for the majority of students."
"I want to finish my Bachelor of Phys. Ed. degree and then get an after degree in Education. I am then planning to be teacher and be actively involved in coaching and promoting physical education."
"To allow for minor career changes within field of study."
"To receive a training so that if an emergency ever arrives and I must provide for my family, then I will have a career to fall back on and be able to support myself and/or my family."
"Get a degree. Any degree will do. Good marks are a bonus. Our society has become so proficient at legitimizing inequality that it is essential to have a degree in order to maintain status quo. (Sarcastic but all too true.)"
"To become a millionaire by age 35 (or at least independently wealthy)."
"To graduate knowing that five years (at least) of my life have not been wasted. To start down the road to a rewarding and successful career in my chosen field of endeavor."
"To increase my business skill so I can start my own business."
"To acquire a career where there are jobs, which will pay for the now expensive standard of living. To decide where to place myself, and what career I wish to invest my time into."

"To be able to acquire a job in my field of interest once a degree has been obtained."

(b) Self-development goals:

"To learn more about people. To become more involved in the arts."
"To become more cognizant of God's will for my life."
"Develop assertiveness skills."
"To be the best of anything I can be...."
"I want to find out for myself just what I personally am capable of doing as far as University and career fields."
"Increase friendships and marriage."
"To make and keep friends, to make professional contacts."
"Do more volunteer work."
"To develop strong communications skills. To develop acceptance and open-mindedness--open to new ideas, skills, open to differing opinions, personalities. To learn more about my limits, which ones are self-inflicted, how to push them, expand them."
"Though not totally directly related to my present program, I would like to be able to live a comfortable, worry-free life both during and after my university years. (Nice to dream!)"
"For myself, it is very important that I gain general confidence in myself. I constantly find that I hesitate to speak up; it is hoped that soon this will dissipate."
"Especially to learn to discipline myself and develop my personality to lead the lifestyle I have chosen. More responsibility for my own actions."
"To do my very best without making other things or people which are important to me suffer."

(c) Academic goals:
"No specific goals after a degree in B.Ed. at the moment."
"Some day achieve a masters degree"
"I would like Red Deer College to help us with a Bachelor of Arts course because of the cost. It would help a lot for people who live in Red Deer. Could something like that be in the plan?"

Other comments written on the first questionnaire:

"Generally satisfied with Red Deer College except for some of the instructors. Would like some changes in the grading schemes. After attending Medicine Hat College I would not recommend RDC to a fellow student."

TRANSFER STUDENT SURVEY - SECOND QUESTIONNAIRE

Responses to the second questionnaire mailed October 1, 1987.
Percentages shown are valid percentages.
Discrepancies in percentage totals are due to rounding.

Response rate: 160 students.
Nonpersisters: 16 students.

1. Are you currently registered at a post-secondary institution? Yes: 90.0% No: 10.0%

PART 1: TO BE ANSWERED BY THOSE CURRENTLY ATTENDING A POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTION

1. At which institution are you currently registered?

Red Deer College:	24.3%
University of Alberta:	48.6%
University of Calgary:	18.1%
Lethbridge University:	.7%
Athabasca University:	1.4%
Other:	6.9%

2. If you transferred from Red Deer College to another post-secondary institution, please check all of the items below, indicating the level of difficulty experienced.

	DIFFICULTY					
	Very Low	Low	High	Very High	Mean	Mode
a) Getting to know my way around campus	22.2	56.6	17.2	4.0	2.0	2.0
b) Making new friends	13.1	56.6	24.2	6.1	2.2	2.0
c) Getting to know faculty	7.1	22.2	54.5	16.2	2.8	3.0
d) Obtaining recognition	4.1	32.0	39.2	24.7	2.9	3.0
e) Accessing services (e.g. obtaining special help)	15.1	50.5	25.8	8.2	2.3	2.0
f) Coping with academic requirements	7.1	52.5	33.3	7.1	2.4	2.0
g) Choosing appropriate courses	16.2	40.4	28.2	15.2	2.4	2.0
h) Assuming more responsibility for my program	12.1	50.5	32.3	5.1	2.3	2.0
i) Participating in extra-curricular activities	20.4	50.5	21.4	8.2	2.2	2.0

j) Finding appropriate accommodation	25.3	42.4	24.2	8.1	2.2	2.0
k) Getting to know my way around the city	18.4	49.0	24.5	8.2	2.2	2.0
l) Coping financially with increased costs	1.0	34.7	48.0	16.3	2.8	3.0
m) Coping with the distractions of city life	21.4	55.1	18.4	5.1	2.1	2.0
n) Other difficulties. (Please specify)						

3. Did you have any difficulty obtaining credit for transfer courses completed at Red Deer College?

Yes: 22.0%
No: 78.0%

If you experienced any difficulties in obtaining transfer credits, please specify.

4. Any other comments about your transfer experiences?

5. Have you withdrawn from your studies since transferring?

Yes: 2.0%
No: 98.0%

If "yes", why?

PART 2: TO BE ANSWERED BY THOSE NOT CURRENTLY ATTENDING A POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTION.

Responses: 16 nonpersisters.

1. If you are NOT currently registered at a post-secondary institution, please read the following statements and indicate how important to you the following reasons were for your not continuing your program at the present time.

	IMPORTANCE					
	Very Low	Low	High	Very High	Mean	Mode
a) Obtained a desirable job	25.0	18.8	31.3	25.0	2.6	3.0
b) Lack financial support to continue	37.5	12.5	25.0	25.0	2.4	1.0
c) Grades too low	43.8	25.0	25.0	6.3	2.0	1.0
d) Change of career goals	46.7	26.7	6.7	20.0	2.1	1.0
e) Uncertain about career goals	43.8	12.5	37.5	6.3	2.0	1.0

f) Question value of obtaining a degree	25.0	37.5	18.8	18.8	2.4	2.0
g) Not accepted to the program of my choice by the university	57.1	7.1	14.3	21.4	1.9	1.0
h) Unable to relocate	81.3	---	12.5	6.3	1.4	1.0
i) Poor health	93.8	---	---	6.3	1.2	1.0
j) Encouraged to discontinue by someone of importance to me	87.5	6.3	---	6.3	1.2	1.0
k) Have met my present educational goals	56.3	25.0	12.5	6.3	1.6	1.0
l) Need for a break in my studies	18.8	18.8	25.0	37.5	2.7	4.0
m) Any other reasons?						

2. Have your studies at the College been of value to you?

Yes: 100%
No: ---

3. Do you plan to continue in post-secondary studies within the next three years?

Yes: 70.6%
No: 17.6%
Not sure: 11.8%

Questionnaire Two

Responses to: "If you experienced any difficulties in obtaining transfer credits, please specify."

"I took a U. of A. transfer course at RDC which was not accepted by U. of C."

"History 210 was not accepted by U. of A. --I had to fight to receive credit for it."

"The University [Alberta] doesn't read the "transfer guide" and I had quite a fight to have my History 210 accepted.

"I transferred from Bus. Admin. to Commerce [Calgary] so knew I wouldn't get all RDC courses taken transferred."

"When an instructor is using the same text or doing or covering similar material as courses taken in RDC, something is wrong. We received credit for such courses after a considerable amount of haggling, not to mention lost time in study." [U. of C. student]

"U. of C. was not going to give credit in 311 or 313 for Psych 360. Note: the transfer process would be easier if course numbers coincided, also if more information were available at RDC as to the transfer faculty's requirements. I am presently doing Psych 215 because I was not aware or informed that this is a 1st year course at U. of C."

"Prerequisites for some courses not accepted, so I had to take an alternate. Some curriculum changes here [U. of A.] last year."

"Found it easy. [NAIT] Also applied to U. of A. and had no problems."

"University wouldn't take courses outlined in the Transfer Guide." I am repeating courses - e.g. Music 210 and Phys Ed 201 in Edmonton, using the same text except that they are in CI. I find it is a waste of time since they have already been taken in longer length."

"Didn't let me know about being accepted until end of July [U. of A.] so my schedule and options were limited."

"U. of C. said they wouldn't take Stats. and Experimental Psych--then took one and are still deciding about the other. (They are in the transfer guide.)"

"Bus. 357" [U. of C.]

"Didn't get credit for Drama 243 and 251 [U. of C]. Programs filled by Feb. I should have come up earlier to register. I had to suck hole to get in. The Dean at U. of C. talked to my RDC Dept. Head. The Dean claims that he always has a problem with Red Deer students showing up late (like in Feb.) to register."

"Courses I took between 1978-80 which were classified as 100 level courses then, but have since been changed to 200 level." [A.U. student]

"I had extra courses in my program [Education] which weren't accepted--no surprise."

"Didn't need pre-Dental program as ended up in Dental Hygiene, but that's ok."

"I am registered as a student doing independent studies because I am unable to relocate. If it's ever possible, I will transfer to finish my degree!"

"Not personally, but students attempting to transfer from Education to Faculte St. Jean were not credited for any practicum in French 200 courses taken."

"They [Alberta College of Art] considered putting me in 2nd year although I had good marks with two years at RDC. I got into 3rd year, but with some difficulty."

"I got full credits [U. of Sask.] but didn't like equivalents given for advance standing--think I should have been given credit in other courses."

"Transferred to Faculte St. Jean and could not receive credit for French 200 taken at RDC. Had to retake a 200 level French class."

"I have to get letters sent from the department to the faculty and the department head is very reluctant to do so."

"Only got 1/2 credit for 2 courses. I'm listed as a 1st year student though in 3rd year. Registrar at RDC is attempting to sort it out--and now I'm listed as a second year student."

"Had some difficulty with one element, but once I pointed out to the Records Office [U. of A.] I had completed it and which course I had, everything was all right."

"I may have 'lucked out' as I have 3rd year status [U. of A. Educ. student]. Maybe secondary route students had more problems."

Six students indicated that the process went smoothly for them.

Questionnaire Two

Responses to: Have you experienced any other difficulties in adapting to the other post-secondary institution?

"Academics are more challenging. Standards are higher at U. of C. in 3rd year from 2nd year at RDC."

"Registration problems. Lots of work to sort them out." [U. of A.]

"Find university very, very impersonal. Hard to motivate yourself to do well because they don't know you or even care. I don't like it so far." [U. of A.]

"Coping with uncaring attitude of profs and staff to students (especially undergraduates)" [U. of A.]

"Traffic heavy."

"I'm lonely once and a while--though I've friends I can call. Not like Red Deer where you know everyone."

"I hate living away from home! My husband lives and works in Red Deer."

"Find classes too overcrowded, thus one doesn't have much opportunity to ask questions in lectures. Too many other students ask questions and there often isn't enough time to everyone's question."

"Adjusting to the enormity of University and city life in general--everying is so big. There are so many people!"

"A large number of courses were full by the time I was able to register."

"Was not able to enter into desired faculty (Mgmt) as my qualifications weren't high enough. I feel this is partially a result of not being properly informed of the strict standards of the Faculty at the U. of C. as opposed to other universities."

"Spread out schedules; bus transportation difficulties."

"Leaving my home town for the first time since birth, leaving friends, boyfriend, family and quitting my job I've had for six years. The University is overwhelming--it's so hard to adapt to such a difference environment!"

"Registration was a hassle because a few courses that I had to take were full and they just say 'tough luck' and your program gets screwed up."

"Big classes."

"Transportation around the city, if you don't have a car."

"Obtaining a good paying part-time job, transportation, lack of student services, ineffective student government."

"Generally getting used to living in a larger city, e.g. noise level, traffic, line ups, etc."

"I miss Red Deer and some of the nice people there. I enjoyed every minute of my stay at Red Deer College--it's a great place to be!"

"Leaving my family in Red Deer so I can finish my degree. I wish Red Deer offered a degree program!"

"Course requirements for completion weren't clearly defined. Insufficient and misguiding information given. Personal interviews not much help."

"Takes more time to make new friends. Everyone is so busy, and there's little time for social life."

"Problems with landlord. He's slow at things. Problems with phone bill and charged extra though didn't receive the first bill."

"Was not told until 2 weeks before end of courses at Red Deer that we had to attend the university during spring or go an extra year."

"Everything is so time consuming at U. of A. Bookstore, post office, registrar's--line ups everwhere! Takes 20 minutes to mail a letter!"

"Getting RDC to send my marks to U. of A. resulted in my not being able to register in a summer correspondence course from Athabasca U., as well as not being accepted as early as I could have, meaning not getting a couple of courses I wanted."

"Just finding time to get everything done in a shorter time period."

Questionnaire Two

Responses to: "Any other comments about your transfer experiences?"

"Much easier to make the move from a small town to Red Deer to Edmonton than it would have been if I would have gone straight to U. of A."

"I was a bit familiar with campus from visiting my sister and boyfriend here last year--otherwise I would have been a complete basket case!" [U. of A.]

"College staff failed to tell us we required two courses not offerd at the College in order to be caught up with other 3rd year students." [U. of A.]

"Really liked RDC because less demanding. Great atmosphere--can talk to profs if you want to because it's a smaller campus. I would have stayed for 4 years if could get a degree at RDC. I would like to see a degree program for Central Alta. Too costly for students to change cities, and very difficult!"

"When I got here [U. of C.] I had to find another faculty/major until I picked up the course (Stats.) I was missing. No one at Red Deer seemed to know the requirements for U. of C. but assumed they were the same as the U. of A. They aren't."

"If Red Deer had Third and Fourth year programs, I would definitely be in the Red Deer taking them. I've withdrawn from one course simply because I had six scheduled."

"It is an entirely different atmosphere from lovable RDC!" [U. of A.]

"I was very lucky to have commenced my studies at RDC. It gave me a very good basis for my current studies. University is so much more impersonal."

"It was a lot of work because instructions were vague." [U. of A.]

"Registration procedure inefficient and drawn out. Red Deer's was much more streamlined." [U. of Sask.]

"I got into 3rd year, but with some difficulty." [U. of A.]

"Ambiguity in calendar and lack of information made this experience totally unenjoyable and frustrating."
[U. of A.]

"Don't get enough help or advice from people who are supposed to know what you need to attend certain universities. Also not enough scholarships available for married students with over 8 averages. It is a financial strain attending the U. of A. and living there, while my family is here."

"Program changed at U. of A. just as I was transferring. U. of A. said I should be in new program--I though I should be in the old program (major problem)."

"I feel RDC gave me an excellent standard of education which allowed for a relatively easy transition into university study."

"Grade 4 pass is a pass in Red Deer but not in Calgary. Not good. RDC counsellors referred me to wrong courses to transfer to Calgary. Therefore much wasted time."

"Registration was difficult!" [U. of A.]

"Biol. 296 not credited. (Old course at Red Deer)"

"I took a mature students' orientation which proved to be very helpful."

"Excellent."

"The work load in Red Deer College more than prepared me for that of Law School [Osgoode] as well as the level of difficulty. The only suggestion I would make is to take more courses that dealt with more 'abstract' concepts and policy issues than Commerce did. I actually find the work load here quite minimal in comparison to that of College. However a great deal of this is due to the different grading system where our marks are based on a 100% final."

"Good idea to start in a College--smaller program and smaller environment--it's a good transition from high school to university and I think it's important."

"Word of advice: Check with University in process of transferring to be sure you have correct information. College doesn't necessarily know."

"Really easy to transfer."

"I originally was registered at the U. of C. for Sept. 87 but housing arrangements fell through. I cancelled registration there and am presently registered with Athabasca."

"Lot of trouble for transcripts getting to U. of Calgary. Phoned twice, and found out it was a U. of C. problem. (U. of A. got their transcripts.)"

"No problem. RDC courses transfer well to U. of A."

"All the courses in my core list had prerequisites which I had no way of getting before transferring here, so I ended up taking 2nd choice courses which kind of makes me mad."

"I'm a math major and spent an extra year at RDC for a 300 Calculus to find out it won't go toward my major but as an option."

"Didn't get credit from Drama 243 & 251."

"The support and motivation in school is lower, therefore, it is harder to get into school work."

"Science teaching very similar to the College. Some big classes, but can get help if you ask for it. Some classes are small." [U. of A.]

"Not accepted until mid-August and course selection limited. Extra workload over what I had at College, and pace in class is heavier. Would go straight to University and not to a College next time--because of this transfer problem."

"Went really smoothly."

"I couldn't get accommodation near the university [U. of A.] although I started looking in July. Start looking in Edmonton for accommodation in early June, especially if you want to live on campus. I had to pay August rent extra to get a place. RDC is a good basis educationally, and you make friends and they are very important in the 1st 10 weeks here which are horribly hard. Good support group. I come home every weekend though."

"Miss the benefits of a smaller organization: personal, flexible, nature of instructors, quality of instruction is great, other staff being quite accessible, less overwhelming system."

"I found it difficult obtaining information in regards to alterate routes of transfer--e.g. other than the U. of A. It would be very helpful to have a booklet outlining all alternative transfer locations, and all universities with similar programs." [U. of C.]

"The hardest part was moving away from home."

"Not bad. I really like the phone registration system. Had a minor problem, but easy to remedy as I can register anytime at home."

"The degree requirements needed were not the same at U. of A. as were outline while at RDC."

"The program at Red Deer covers years one and three at U. of A. I would prefer to have years 1 and 2 at RDC be the same as Yrs. 1 and 2 of U. of A."

"The quality of instruction at RDC is way higher than at U. of A."

"Very overwhelming and hard to adapt to such a different environment." [U. of A.]

"Pretty smooth transition." [U. of A.]

"Would like to go to school for the rest of my life! I love it!" [NAIT]

"Very smooth. I'm really enjoying the U. of C. Super!"

"RDC does not have anywhere near the scholarships for Pre-Prof. programs as the U. of A. and by attending RDC I don't qualify for U. of A. scholarships for my pre-prof. program."

"I miss Red Deer and the College particularly. RDC is so friendly--small. People are so close. I really miss it!"

"Red Deer College spoils us rotten! I'm going to Brandon U. next term on basketball scholarship. I don't like the impersonal larger campus." [U. of A.]

"Would be nice for the U. of A. to make the registration process more clear--too difficult."

"What are 300 and 400 level courses at RDC are 200 and 300 courses at U. of C. (i.e. Micro 315 is Micro 247 and Psyc 489 is Psyc 385)"

"One should not be punished for being a transfer student. We were accepted late and course accessibility was minimal." [U. of C.]

"A lot of unexpected costs! I didn't expect to have to pay $5 to $20 per course for in-class notes. Astronomical! Parking costs high and transportation is costly too."

"I would never recommend that anyone ever transfer."

"A pain--I would never recommend that anyone transfer."

APPENDIX C

Characteristics of Students Who Re-Registered at Red Deer College In Fall, 1987

(The Non-Transferring Persisters)

CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS WHO REMAINED AT RED DEER COLLEGE

Of the students registered in second year University Transfer programs at Red Deer College in the winter term, 1987, 14.2% (35) re-registered at the College in the subsequent fall.

The characteristics of these students were identified by two means: by checking data contained in the College files, and by comparing their responses to the March questionnaire with those of transferring persisters.

Characteristics as Determined from College Data

Of this group, 48.6% (17 students) registerd as full-time students in the fall, 34.3% (12) as part-time students, and 17.1% (6) registered with withdrew by mid-September.

Many of these students' involvement in the College has lasted over several years. Nine students (25.7%) first began studies in upgrading, to make up high school deficiencies. Of the part-time registrants, 8 (22.8%) have been taking courses for more than three years.

Some students appeared to have remained at the College another year to complete deficiencies in their program. Four students (11.4%) had completed their transfer program and were taking courses beyond the limit accepted by provincial universities. Another student switched to a different College program.

Differences in Characteristics of Non-transferring Persisters and Transferring Persisters

Those who remained at RDC were compared to persisters in the following characteristics: Age, gender, marital status, concern about ability to finance their education, program in which registered, registration status, grade point average, student perception of performance, plans expressed in March for continuing education in the fall and where they planned on registering, anticipated difficulties in adjusting to another institution if transferring, preference to transfer or to stay at the College if an appropriate program were available, and goals for attending. Statistically significant differences are shown in Table C-1.

Table C-1

Significant Differences in Characteristics of Non-transferring Persisters and Transferring Persisters

Characteristic	RDC Persister Percentage	Persister Percentage
Age (p $\leq$.01)		
21 years or younger	42.9	69.4
22 years or older	57.1	30.6
Marital status (p $\leq$.01)		
Single	57.1	87.2
Married	25.7	8.3
Other	17.1	4.6
Registration status (p $\leq$.05)		
Full-time (60% of full program or more)	82.9	95.4
Part-time (less than 60% of full program)	17.1	4.6
Cumulative grade point average (t -2.60)	6.3	6.8
Student rating of academic performance (p $\leq$.05)		
Better than I expected	5.7	22.0
About what I expected	57.1	35.8
Not up to my expectations	37.1	42.2
Planning on continuing studies in Fall, 1987 (p $\leq$.05)		
Yes	88.6	96.3
No	--	2.8
Undecided	11.4	.9
If registering in the Fall, indicate institution (p $\leq$.01)		
Red Deer College	93.8	1.9
Another college	--	1.9
University of Alberta	--	63.2
University of Calgary	6.3	24.5
Lethbridge University	--	.9
Another university	--	7.5

Table C-1 (continued)

Characteristic	RDC Persister Percentage	Persister Percentage
Expected year of degree completion (p ≤.01)		
1988	6.9	2.8
1989	24.1	74.8
1990	48.3	16.8
1991	3.4	5.6
1992	6.9	--
1994	3.4	--
1996	3.4	--
1999	3.4	--
Hours per week in various activities		
In class (mean) (t -2.08)	16.4	19.1
Studying & working on assignments (t -2.75)	15.6	21.0
In family-related activity (t .024)	13.4	7.3
Anticipated difficulties in adjusting to another institution (t -3.45) (4 = very high, 1 = very low)		
Choosing appropriate courses	2.2	2.7
Probability of temporarily discontinuing program (t 3.40)	2.6	2.0
Probability of getting a bachelor's degree (t -2.40)	3.5	3.8
Goal Statements		
Receive training in new job skills (t 2.15)	3.1	2.8
Achieve high grades in courses (t -1.99)	3.0	3.3

Discussion of Findings

The data suggest that based on means those who remained at the College for the Fall term were older, more likely than transferring persisters to be married (or "other" status), and more likely to be part-time students with fewer hours in class and fewer hours spent studying and working on class assignments. Their cumulative grade point averages were lower, but a larger proportion indicated their academic performance was as they had expected.

At the time of the March survey, more were undecided as to whether or not they would be continuing in studies. If continuing, all but two planned on returning to the College. Non-transferring persisters planned on taking longer to complete their degrees, and predicted more so than persisters that they might temporarily discontinue their program. They were less certain than other persisters that they would get a bachelor's degree within the next three years. They rated the goal "To receive training in new job skills" higher, and the goal "To achieve high grades in courses" lower than transferring persisters.

From the data it appears that non-transferring persisters were as well integrated into campus life as were persisters, and their write in comments were generally similar.